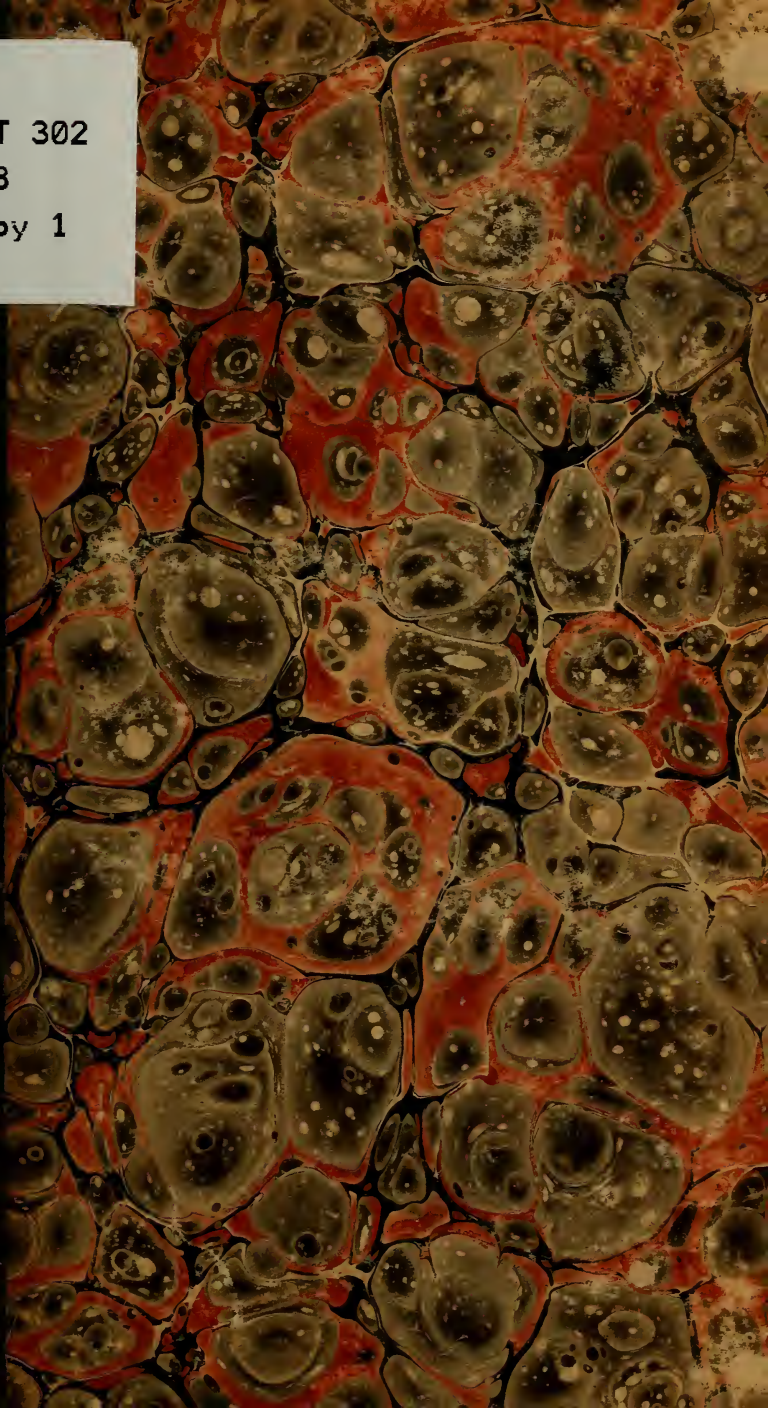


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# OUR SAVIOUR:

OR

## A BRIEF EXPOSITION

OF THE

BIRTH, TEACHING, MIRACLES, DEATH, RESURRECTION  
AND GREAT COMMISSION, OF JESUS CHRIST.

BY A TEACHER.

“And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”—2 Tim. iii. 15.

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# CONTENTS.

	Page
INTRODUCTION, . . . . .	5
CHAPTER I.—The Birth of our Saviour, . . . .	7
II.—Flight into Egypt, . . . .	14
III.—Our Saviour's Baptism, . . . .	19
IV.—The Preaching of Jesus Christ, . . . .	23
V.—The Preaching of Jesus Christ, . . . .	28
VI.—The Lord's Prayer, . . . .	38
VII.—The Preaching of Jesus Christ, . . . .	44
VIII.—The Preaching of Jesus Christ, . . . .	48
IX.—Jesus Teaching in Parables, . . . .	52
X.—The Miracles of our Saviour, . . . .	57
XI.—The Miracle of giving sight to the blind,	62
XII.—The Miracle of healing the withered hand, . . . . .	66
XIII.—The Miracles of walking on the water, and stilling the tempest, . . . .	70
XIV.—The Miracle of feeding the multitude,	76
XV.—Our Saviour's rule of forgiveness, . . . .	81
XVI.—Our Saviour's love for little children, . . . .	84
XVII.—The rich young man, . . . .	88
XVIII.—The death of John the Baptist, . . . .	93
XIX.—The displeasure of the chief priests, . . . .	99
XX.—Our Saviour's lamentation over Jeru- salem, . . . . .	102
XXI.—The second coming of Christ, . . . .	105
XXII.—The Saviour betrayed by Judas, . . . .	111
XXIII.—The Lord's Supper, . . . .	117
XXIV.—Peter's self-confidence; and his denial of the Saviour, . . . .	122
XXV.—Our Saviour's voluntary death, . . . .	127
XXVI.—Our Saviour's suffering, . . . .	131
XXVII.—Our Saviour's Resurrection, . . . .	136
XXVIII.—Our Saviour's great commission, . . . .	141





## INTRODUCTION.

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MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS:—

THIS little book is intended to assist you in understanding a part of the Bible. I invite you to read carefully with me several passages in the book of Matthew, and see if the comment which you will find after the passages of Scripture will help you to understand them better than you did before: see if you are better acquainted with the character and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. If so, you may prize the knowledge above “the wealth of worlds;” if not, I may have failed in commenting, or you in reading—but the Word of God is still pure, and all are guilty of great sin who read it with a careless eye, and an unfeeling heart. Have you thought how necessary it is that *you* should not only *read*, but *understand* and *feel* the truth of the Bible? Perhaps you study it in the Sabbath school, and it may be you read it with your parents, or listen to hear them read it morning and evening,—but do you think every time you hear or read a passage, “now what

is the meaning of this? Does it apply to me? and what should it lead me to do?" I once knew a poor woman who had a large family of little children to take care of, so that she had to work from morning till night, and could not often get time to read a chapter in the Bible; but she told me that she always opened that good book in the morning, and read a few verses, and those precious words she tried to keep in her mind all day. Sometimes, in the midst of her cares and labors, she forgot them, and then she would look for a moment in her opened Bible again;—"and you cannot think," said she, "how sweet the word of God is to me." This poor woman felt that the Bible was her only guide to heaven, and though her hands were employed all the day, and she had many cares and sorrows, she desired to understand the word of God, and be prepared to go, when she died, to that happy place where there is no sin or poverty, sickness or death. Equally anxious should you be to remember, understand and feel the word of God. Never forget that the Bible is the book—the only book—which your Heavenly Father has given to direct you how to escape from everlasting punishment, and find the home of the righteous, where all is peace and love.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR.

MATTHEW ii. 1—12.

1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

2. Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet,

6. And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

IN reading the passage of Scripture which you see above, you soon come to the precious name of Jesus. This is the name which you should

know and love better than all others. **JESUS** is the name which should sound sweeter to you than the names of your brothers and sisters, or even those of your father and mother ; and it is to assist you in learning how good and lovely Jesus is, and how much he has done for you, that this Sabbath school book is prepared.

If you were to read the whole Bible through, you would find a great deal in all the books about the Saviour of the world, that is, Jesus Christ ;—but each of the four first books of the New Testament, gives a particular account of him. They are four histories of his life and death, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ; four good men who lived at the time our Saviour was on earth, and the most of them went about with him, hearing his gracious words, and seeing his wonderful works. These men wrote as the Holy Spirit directed. They all give the same general account of Jesus, yet there are some particulars related by some of them which others do not give. They all loved the Saviour, and took pleasure in writing about him ; but it was God who directed them to write, and he inspired, that is, he taught them exactly what they ought to write, because he intended that we should know, and all who have the Bible should know, the true history of Jesus Christ. Therefore, remember, when you read the Testament with me, or when you read any part of the Bible, that the words you read came from God ; they are his words written by the hand of a man ; and remember too, if you neglect to read the Bible, or if you refuse to make it the guide of your life, you despise the God who made you

and who will one day call you to account to him for all the actions of life.

In the verses above we have Matthew's account of our Saviour's birth. In the first of them we are told that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This was a small town in the country of Judea, about six miles from Jerusalem, its chief city. Judea was in Asia, on the opposite side of the globe from where you and I live, and it is now one thousand eight hundred and forty-four years since Jesus was born there. Yet, as God was so good as to teach his servants to record it for us, we know just when and where he was born, as well as the people did who lived in Bethlehem. Luke informs us in the second chapter of his gospel, that when Jesus was a little babe he was laid in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn. A manger in England, where the New Testament was translated, was a kind of box, built up for horses and oxen to eat their hay from. Did you ever learn that beautiful verse of Dr. Watts?

“Soft and easy was my cradle;  
Coarse and hard my Saviour lay,  
When his birth-place was a stable,  
And his softest bed was hay.”

But in Judea they had no such stables as in England, or in our own country. Learned men say it was a caravansary, a kind of inn, where the caravans, or large companies of people, in journeying, rested at night. In one part of the building the people lodged, and in the other part the camels, horses and other animals were sheltered. It was probably in such a place our Saviour was born.

When you were a tender babe, and could not



bear to open your eyes to the light of the sun, and a heavy sound would make you spring and catch your breath in fright—you had an easy cradle to be rocked in, and a soft bed to sleep in beside your mother; the windows were shaded to keep out the bright rays of the sun, and every thing around you was kept still and quiet. But the blessed Saviour, who came from heaven to save sinners, when he was a babe was laid in a manger, the stable was the chamber of his rest, and the rude noises of the beasts fell on his soft ear.

Although the people of Bethlehem did not know who Jesus was, there were some wise men living in the country east of that who were expecting the Saviour to come into the world, and they came to Jerusalem to inquire for him.

God uses a variety of means to guide his people in the right way, and inform them about himself. Those men were told that Jesus had come by a peculiar star which God caused them to see in their own country, and which he made to move before them, and direct their course. Have you not heard Jesus called “the Star of Bethlehem?” He is called so because this star moved towards Bethlehem, and stopped over the place where he lay. When you read the third verse above perhaps you thought it very strange that Herod and the people of Jerusalem should be troubled, because the wise men told them that they supposed Jesus was born. Good people would not have been troubled, but greatly rejoiced to hear of the arrival of such a stranger; but Herod was a very wicked king. He made all the people obey him, and as he heard Jesus called “the king of the Jews,” he



feared that he should lose some of his power, and be obliged to submit to Jesus. The people around Judea would be troubled by the same thing which troubled him, for he was so wicked that he would not allow them to be happy if he was not happy himself.

In the fourth verse we are told that Herod called together all "the chief priests and scribes of the people," and demanded of them where Christ should be born. These were the wisest men in the Jewish nation. They had the Old Testament to read, and they knew that God had promised to send a Saviour into the world. It appears from their answer that they knew in what place Jesus should be born, because it was thus written by the prophet, "And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel." We find this passage in somewhat different words, in the book of Micah, chapter v. verse 2. You and I have both the Old and New Testament, and we should often compare them together, that we may see how God prepared the way for his Son to come into the world, and taught his people to believe and trust in him long before he came. Herod felt very anxious about the strange star, and after he had inquired particularly of the wise men at what time it appeared, he sent them to Bethlehem to search for the child which was born king of the Jews; and told them when they found him to return and bring him word, that he might "come and worship him." This wicked king did not intend to worship the Saviour; he only said this to deceive the wise men;

perhaps he did deceive them, but you know he could not deceive God. The good men listened to the words of the king, and then they departed to find the infant Saviour; but they did not go without a guide, for the same star which they had seen in their own country, moved along before them until it came over the place where Jesus was, and then it stood still. When they saw the star "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." They felt that God was watching over and directing them in the right way, although they had found no one in the city of Jerusalem to assist them in searching for the Saviour. When the wise men found the young child with Mary his mother, they worshiped him, and presented unto him gifts which they had brought with them. In the eastern part of the world, those who called on kings, and other great men, brought presents to them; and these were brought to honor the Saviour. It is said they worshiped him. As we now use the word worship, this would mean that they paid the Saviour reverence, such as is due to God, and that would have been right; but we are not certain that the wise men did worship him in this manner, because as the word was then used, to worship only meant to pay great respect to a person. Herod, you know, was expecting these men to return to him, when they had found the Saviour; but God was watching over Jesus, and over the wicked king too, for we learn in the twelfth verse that he warned the wise men by a dream to go to their country another way, and not to return to Herod. They chose to obey God rather than man; and so the king did not learn where the infant Saviour was.

After this we hear no more of the wise men ; but as we have reason to think they were good men, we have no doubt they were happy as they journeyed to their home. They thought and spoke much of Jesus, and we hope they understood that he had come to be the Saviour of the world. Perhaps they sometimes thought of Herod, and pitied him because he was so wicked ; but they need not have felt afraid of him, though he was a mighty king, for God, who was their friend, was far more mighty than he.

From this account respecting the birth of our Saviour, what instruction can my young reader draw ? Perhaps you have been thinking “ there can be no lesson for me in these passages of scripture, which just gives us the circumstances of the Saviour’s birth ; ” but I think we can find a lesson here. Learn first, not to look among those who are rich and powerful, and live in splendid mansions, for the wisest and best people.—Jesus Christ, who was superior to any being that ever dwelt on earth, chose the humble abode of poverty, and very many of those who are the followers of Jesus, are among the poor and despised of the earth. Secondly, learn that the wicked and powerful men are in the hands of God, and he can easily prevent their vile plans from being executed, as he did the plans of Herod.

## CHAPTER II.

### FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

MATT. ii. 13—21.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15. And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18. In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20. Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

AFTER the wise men had departed, an angel of the Lord—that is a being from heaven, one of those pure and happy spirits that dwell in the presence of God, and always rejoice to do his will—came to Joseph as he slept, and told him by a dream to take Jesus and Mary, and flee into Egypt, and remain there, until he came to see them again. Joseph was a good man, who had married Mary, the mother of Jesus, and to these two pious peo-



ple God intrusted the care of his Son, Jesus Christ, when he was an infant.

Have you ever seen a picture called "The flight into Egypt," where a desert country is pictured, with Mary riding on an ass, holding the precious babe close to her bosom; while Joseph is walking beside them, leading the slow beast, and urging him forward. A long road is stretched out before them, and the moon and stars are shining over their heads; while all around, far and wide, we can see no habitation, and no living creature, but this lonely party hurrying away from the dominions of a wicked king. If you have never seen this picture, you can easily draw the scene in your thoughts; and you can think too how Mary felt when Joseph first told her his dream, and she found that Herod was seeking the life of the child Jesus. She had longed for some better home for the sweet babe, than the inn—some better cradle than a manger; and when the wise men came to worship him, she knew that it was right to pay him honor and reverence, and it may be she expected others, and even the king and the chief priests and scribes to come and worship him too;—but now she learned that Herod was seeking to kill him. Kill that innocent and lovely babe! Kill that good being who had come to be the Redeemer of the world! Yet, strange and cruel as it was, they knew it must be true, for it was the angel of the Lord who had told them; therefore they hastened away from Bethlehem, to find another home among strangers.

They were obliged to make a long journey, and to travel by night, lest Herod's people should see

them fleeing, and take them back to him. You would think it very tedious to be out all night on a journey; and no doubt they felt weary and needed sleep; but they loved Jesus very much, and thought little of themselves, if they could but preserve him. Besides, they were doing just as God directed them, and when people do right, they never feel very unhappy.

Under the protection of their Heavenly Father, they arrived safe in Egypt, where they remained until the death of Herod. This was told by the prophet Hosea, many years before this, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

When the cruel Herod found the wise men did not return to tell him where the Saviour was, "he was exceeding wroth." He thought they had deceived him, and disobeyed his orders, and for this he meant to be revenged; besides, he thirsted for the blood of the infant King of the Jews. He did not care how much distress he caused if he could only destroy him; and he thought if he sent his servants out to murder all the young children in Bethlehem, and in the country around, they could not fail to kill Jesus with the rest. So this hard-hearted king directed his men to take all the children that were two years old, and under, from the cradle, or from their mothers' arms, or tottering about the floor, and playing with their brothers and sisters, and murder them all. Here the words of the prophet Jeremy, or Jeremiah, came to pass, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning. Rachel," (which represents the mothers) "weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they



are not." Do you wonder that there was bitter weeping?

Perhaps you have seen a little brother or sister die; and your heart ached when you saw its pretty eyes grow dim, and its sweet lips close in silence; and when your mother bent over it, and groaned, and wept, and kissed its cold cheek—you wept aloud, and felt as if you could not be comforted. But your brother or sister was not murdered. Think how you would have felt if a ruffian had come into the house, and seized both your mother's youngest children, if she had a little infant, and another two years old, and killed them before your eyes. Think how your mother would shriek, and wring her hands, and perhaps lose her senses; and while you were thinking only of your own distress, some one should come to tell you that the murderers had been into the next house, and the next, and your little cousins and friends had fallen also by their cruel hands; and every house around was like your own, filled with the voice of woe!

Just such distress as this, Herod caused in Bethlehem, and the country around, because he meant to destroy the Saviour. If you know children who are very fond of power—anxious to make others obey them, you have reason to fear that they will dare to do very wicked things rather than give up their power. If you feel this disposition yourself, you should watch against it, and ask God to take it from you lest it should lead you to commit great sin. No doubt Herod would have hated the Saviour had he lived to hear him preach, and see his mighty works, but it could not be for this that

he hated him now. It was only because he thought he was born to be a king.

All this time while Herod tried to destroy Jesus, he was safe and happy, far away in Egypt. God had taken care of him because he knew what was in the heart of the wicked king. From the nineteenth and twentieth verses we learn that it was not long that the good family were obliged to remain in Egypt, for while Jesus was yet a young child, the angel appeared again to Joseph in a dream, and told him to arise, and return, with Jesus and his mother, into the land of Israel, because Herod was dead. O miserable king! how soon was he called to give an account of the deeds done in the body! He was expecting long to enjoy his kingdom, but he is called away, and can carry nothing with him. He hated his fellow beings, and defied the God who made him, but now he is called before that God in judgment!

Joseph and Mary were obedient to their Heavenly Father, and they took the young child, and journeyed back into the land of Israel. Now we need not suppose they traveled in the night, for they knew that Herod was laid in his grave, and they had nothing more to fear from him. They came trusting, as all good people do, in the protection of God, and rejoicing in the mercy and loving kindness which had watched over them.

The flight into Egypt shows you how carefully God watches over those who love him, to keep them from all harm, and guide them in the right way; and the death of Herod shows you that the wicked are in the hands of God, and will not long be allowed to persecute the righteous.

## CHAPTER III.

### OUR SAVIOUR'S BAPTISM.

MATT. iii. 13—17.

13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

NEITHER of the histories of our Saviour gives any account of his childhood, and early youth, except that Luke relates one circumstance respecting his visiting Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary, when he was twelve years old. From that account we learn that he was capable of instructing the learned men in the temple, that he loved the duties of religion at that age, and that he was obedient to Joseph and Mary. The period between our Saviour's birth and his baptism, of which we have an account in the verses above, was about thirty years. All that time we have now passed over, and as you read this chapter, you must not think of Jesus as a babe in the arms of Mary, but as of a man about the age of thirty years. In the thirteenth verse we are told that Jesus came to John to be baptized of him. John was a very pious man, whom God sent to prepare the way for his Son; that is to tell the people Jesus was coming,

and exhort them to repent, baptize the penitents, and prepare them to receive him. He was so much devoted to the service of God, that some thought he was the Saviour; but he told them distinctly that he was not, but that Jesus was so much better than he, that he "was not worthy to bear his shoes." By this he meant that he was not worthy to be a waiter or servant for the Saviour. From the fourteenth verse we learn that John was surprised that Jesus should come to be baptized by him, and at first he did not consent, but said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus answered, "suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." As if he had said to John, "The circumstances are such now that it is proper I should be baptized by you. I have come into the world to obey all my Father's commands, and to set a perfect example for my followers." These reasons satisfied John, and "he suffered him," that is, he consented to baptize him.

It may be, my young friends, that you have seen persons baptized in a font, or stream, or at the margin of the sea. Perhaps you have stood on a verdant bank, while a soft breeze was playing over the scene, and all nature was lovely around you; and as you listened, the voice of prayer was heard ascending from beside the still waters; and while the people were all solemn and thoughtful around you, the minister led a person slowly down into the water, and laid him gently beneath the waves, and then raised him up as he pronounced, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!" This you know was



called a baptism. But did you think it was a ceremony which had no meaning, and one which we might attend to, or omit, just as we pleased? Far from this. Jesus said it became HIM "to fulfil all righteousness;" and it is the duty and pleasure of all who love him, to follow his example, and obey all his commands.

We understand from the Scriptures, that our Saviour appointed this ordinance for all his followers to observe in all ages unto the end of the world. He was baptized himself to set an example for all christians to follow, and, besides this, baptism, that is being buried under water and raised up, was designed to show forth our death to sin, and resurrection to a new life, and to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ on our behalf. In speaking of his own death, Jesus says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Christians are baptized in obedience to the command of Christ; but he did not command them to do a thing which had no use or meaning. All persons who are baptized show by that act to all who know them that they intend to forsake the world, and join the christian church, and endeavor to live always as the religion of Jesus requires. They show also, by having their "bodies washed in pure water," that their sins are washed away in the blood of Christ; that is, are forgiven, because Jesus has suffered and died for sinners, and now that God has shown them the wickedness of their hearts, and taught them to hate sin, they hope to be saved from the punishment they deserved through his mercy in Christ Jesus. They show also that they

trust in Jesus to raise up their bodies from the grave, even though they have mouldered back to dust, just as they are now raised up from the liquid grave in which they have been buried by baptism.

I hope my reader realizes that it is a very solemn thing to be baptized. It is promising to the world, to angels, and to the great and holy God, that we will no longer live to ourselves, but "to him who hath loved us and given himself for us." No one should be baptized but such persons as truly believe in Jesus Christ, love him as their Saviour, depend wholly on his grace, and resolve by the help of God they will obey all his commands, join the church, and follow Christ. It is a very solemn thing to witness a baptism. When you stand by the water's side let your mind be sober and attentive. Listen thoughtfully to the prayers and singing, and look on the ordinance not only to see the candidate laid beneath the wave, but to think of the Saviour's love for sinners, and to think of that blessed hope which all enjoy who trust in him—the hope that they will be raised up from the grave, and taken to heaven to live forever with the Lord.

We learn from the sixteenth verse that when Jesus was baptized, as he was going up out of the water, "the heavens were opened unto him," and he, that is John, "saw the Spirit of God descending like the appearance of a dove and lighting upon Jesus." In the seventeenth we are told that a voice from heaven was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Although our Saviour's baptism was in many circumstances like those which you and I have witnessed—in this it



was far different. No other baptism has been like this; none can ever be like it, for God will not say of any other person, "This is my beloved Son."

In this wonderful manner did God make known to John, and to the people, that his Son, whom he had long since promised to send, had now come into the world to be a Saviour for sinners.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST.

MATT. iv. 17.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

I AM now about to study with you, the preaching and the works of Jesus Christ, of whose birth and baptism you have been reading. If I do not understand the Bible myself, I cannot explain it to you. If I teach you that which is false, I must give account of it in the day of judgment. I therefore ask in prayer that my heavenly Father will teach me, that I may teach you. I therefore study the Bible with great care; and besides I read the books which good men have written about the Bible, that I may not give you one idea which I do not think is right, or which your pious friends will not approve.

Now let us attend to the *preaching* of our Saviour. To preach, you know, is to speak in public; therefore we understand from the passage above that the time had now come when Jesus

began to address the people who followed him. He did not converse, and answer questions only; but he spake to large assemblies of people. He began to preach, saying, "*Repent.*" This single word means a great deal. Have you studied it, and tried to understand its meaning? To repent is to be very sorry for our past sins, to confess them to God, and to forsake them by turning to the Lord. Repentance makes us feel that we would not do wrong again, if it were possible to do it in secret. We know that sin will make us unhappy, and ruin our souls; but this does not distress us so much as the thought that we have done that which our Heavenly Father cannot approve; this leads us to hate every thing wicked, and desire to be made pure and holy, that he may love us.

I remember that one of my little friends, who is not now on earth, used to say, when I spoke or read to him of any thing he did not fully understand, "Will you explain it?" Perhaps some of you will understand the nature of repentance better if I illustrate it—that is, try to make it plain to you by supposing a case. Suppose there are two little brothers, we will call them Thomas and James, who have a very kind father who supports them, and is willing to expend a great deal of money for their education, and do every thing in his power to make them useful and happy when they become men. These boys are sent to school together, and they both waste their time while there, destroy their books, and do a great many things which they know their father does not approve. They both think they love their father, and sometimes they feel guilty, and think they will be more care-

ful to improve the privileges he gives them ; but still, there is in each of their hearts a very strong disposition to do wrong ; they love idleness and mischief, and finally they begin to play truant. Frequently they go away and spend the whole day with bad company, while their father supposes they are at school. When they come home and see their father's pleasant smile, and hear his affectionate language, each of them feels very uneasy ; his conscience troubles him, and at night he thinks, " I will go to school to-morrow, and be a good boy ; " but in the morning he chooses again the path of wickedness. Thus they both go on ; all the time receiving great care and kindness from their father ; and all the time disobeying him, and daily growing worse and worse. So far we have supposed these boys to be just alike ; but now suppose they come home one night, and find, in addition to all the former favors of their kind father, that he has purchased for them a beautiful and expensive orrery,\* so that his little sons may study about the planets, and understand how each one moves around the sun. When Thomas sees this new proof of his father's love, he cannot help feeling that he does not deserve it, and he thinks for an hour or two of his sinful conduct ; sheds a few tears, and says to himself—but not to his father—" I am sorry I have not done right, and I think I shall do better after this." But he does not feel sorry at heart, confess his faults to his father, forsake them, and beg his pardon, and by the morning he has almost forgotten how good his

\* An Orrery is a machine so made as to show the motions of the planets.

father is, and how wicked he is himself, and so he goes on in the same sinful way as before. When James receives his present he feels as Thomas did, that he does not deserve it, but he feels a great deal more than this. He looks back as far as he can remember, and thinks over all his father's kindness and forbearance towards him, and then he thinks of his own conduct towards his father, and his heart really aches. He remembers the resolutions he has often made, but he knows he has broken them all, and now he dares not think, "I will do well to-morrow," but he says to himself, "I will *confess* to-night." He trembles and weeps, but he is resolved to tell his father all, even if he knows he shall be punished severely. He goes to his father, and with true sorrow of heart informs him of all his misconduct, and humbly asks his forgiveness, and promises entire amendment. The kind father extends his arms to embrace him, and as James listens to his forgiving language, and treasures his wise counsels in his heart,—he feels that his father's love and approbation are worth far more to him than all the amusements which have so long drawn him from his duty. The next morning, instead of thinking of some favorite play as soon as he wakes, he thinks of his father's kindness and forgiveness, and he feels so much love for him that he cannot bear to think of disobeying him again so long as he lives; and from that time he becomes a studious and dutiful boy. Now you can easily decide which of these boys repented of his wickedness; and can you not fully understand what Jesus told the people to do when he called on them to repent?



All the persons whom Jesus addressed, and all the inhabitants of this vast world, are by nature like these wicked, ungrateful sons. God is like the good father, always watching over us, and bestowing on us so many blessings that we cannot count them. It is the duty of every one to repent, confess his sins to our Heavenly Father, and become obedient to all his commands. Until we do this, it is impossible to please God, or do any thing right; therefore Jesus began his preaching by urging this duty; and all his servants who preach in his name to this day, make it their first, and most important business to exhort their hearers to repent. Jesus says in the verse above, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Perhaps some of you have read the Bible through in course; if not, you may have read a part of the Old Testament; and did you observe that its meaning was not so clear, and so easily understood as the meaning of the New Testament? It was written in a darker time. The good people in those ancient days believed that God would send a Saviour to redeem men, but they could not understand exactly how, or when he would come. Now the darkness had passed away; Jesus had come, and the kingdom of heaven was at hand, because he was about to show his mighty works, make known his gracious doctrines, and then die on the cross to save sinners; send the Holy Spirit, and establish a new order of things. Therefore, that was a time when those people to whom Jesus spoke were highly favored, and if they did not then repent they would be more guilty than those who lived and died before the Saviour came into the world.



While you have been reading this chapter on repentance, have you said to yourself, "Do I need repentance?" O yes; the Bible says, "There is none that doeth good, no not one." Every little child has a wicked heart, which needs to be changed; and if you feel that you have never been truly sorry that you have sinned against God—this is the time, at the very moment while you are reading—when you should go to your Heavenly Father, as we have supposed the penitent boy went to his earthly father, and confess all your sins, and ask his forgiveness; and you may be sure that you will receive pardon.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—Faith in Jesus, or believing in him, is also to be preached. Mark describes the preaching of Jesus in these words. (Mark i. 15.) "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." John records the language of Jesus, (chap. iii. 16,) when he preached to the ruler of the Jews, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life."—"He that believeth on him is not condemned." (verse 18.) To believe in Jesus Christ is to receive him as our Saviour. This includes love to him and trust in him,—or the hearty approval of the soul to the gospel method of salvation.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHSIST.

MATT. v. 1—12.

1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:
2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,
3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4. Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.
5. Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.
6. Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.
7. Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.
8. Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.
9. Blessed are the peace-makers : for they shall be called the children of God.
10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Now that Jesus had commenced preaching, and had begun to heal sick people, and cast out evil spirits, there were a good many persons following him ; and it is said in the first of the verses above, that seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain—not a high, rocky, vast wilderness, like the mountains of our country, but an elevated ridge or hill, where the multitude could set around and hear him. “And when he had set down, he opened his mouth, and taught them.” It was the custom in that country for a preacher to sit down while he spoke. Jesus had not yet chosen the twelve apostles ; but a disciple means a learner, or one who desires to be taught, and there were many such persons that gathered around him, and the multitude covered the sides of the hill below.

Think how the benevolent Saviour looked, sitting out in the open air, with the shady trees and broad blue sky over his head, and the wild scenes of nature around him, and a vast multitude, perhaps thousands of people, looking up at him, and trying

to catch every word which fell from his lips—but think most of the words he uttered. He began by saying, “Blessed are *the poor in spirit*; for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.” “Blessed” means happy, and to be poor in spirit means to be humble, and think but little of ourselves. It is to feel that we are sinners, and have done no good works that can recommend us to God, but must depend entirely on his mercy to save us. *Poverty of spirit* does not signify a mean, cowardly spirit—nor a vulgar, degraded, low, trifling mind—nor a mere want of worldly things. Many persons who are poor, mean and degraded; who envy rich people, and fret, murmur, and complain, are very *proud in spirit*. Jesus gave the reason why the poor in spirit are blessed: “For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” That is, they are prepared to receive Jesus for their friend, and then all the blessings he can bestow are theirs. The kingdom of heaven reaches forward, too, into another world, so that the poor in spirit are not only happy on earth, but happy in heaven also. Will you examine your own spirit, and see if the kingdom of heaven is yours? Do you feel as if you are a little better than some of your young companions, or certainly quite as good as they? Do you feel so well satisfied with your own heart, that you think God cannot help loving you; and you are therefore sure of being saved? If so, I cannot think that you are poor in spirit. In the next verse, Jesus says those who *mourn* are blessed; for they shall be comforted. He was still calling on men to repent; and those who are truly sorry for sin still mourn because they have offended their Heavenly Father;

and such mourners, Jesus says, shall be comforted. He himself will be their comforter, for he says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."\* "Blessed are the meek." Meekness is a calm, serene temper of mind; not easily ruffled, or provoked, and patiently bears injuries from others. Meek persons are not cowardly persons, but are those who stand firmly by the truth, and if they receive ill-treatment for it, they bear it patiently, and discover no wicked passions. Our Saviour gave us an example of meekness when he suffered death by the hands of wicked men. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." To meekness is the promise, "For they shall inherit the earth." Christ does not here promise that the meek should have great possessions on earth; but that their gentleness and forbearance should cause them to lead a quiet and peaceable life, and therefore they would enjoy more on earth than others.

Jesus next speaks of those as blessed who hunger

\* Many sinners are very anxious and much distressed in seasons of religious revival, and desire their friends to pray for them, and yet do not *mourn*. A *mourner*, in the Scripture sense, is a penitent, humble sinner, to whom God has promised mercy. The prophet Isaiah (chap. lxi. 1, 2, 3,) is speaking of the ministry of our Saviour, when he says, "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;—to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;—to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."—EDITOR.



and thirst after righteousness; because they shall be filled, or have that which they desire. To hunger, you know, is to feel a strong desire for food. I suppose few of my readers have ever known what it was to be really hungry. You may have thought yourselves suffering for food when you have been out at play after the usual dinner hour;—but none of us, in this land of plenty, feel the distress of hunger, such as those suffer who can never obtain food enough, and sometimes pass two or three days without any. If we had ever suffered this we should understand more fully than we now do what our Saviour meant when he spoke of hungering after righteousness. But if you have never felt severe hunger, perhaps you know what extreme thirst is. Children sometimes play out in warm weather, till they feel the need of water more than anything else in the world. By this you can understand why Jesus used such a figure. If you were very thirsty nothing but water would satisfy you. We might try to entertain you by the sweetest music, the fairest flowers, and the most beautiful pictures; and still you would think more of water than of every thing else. All the world could not turn your thoughts from that which you so much desired. Jesus meant by hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that a person should feel so anxious to have his sins forgiven, and to become good in the sight of God, that he could take no rest without it. Nothing else would satisfy him, and he could not have his thoughts turned away from the subject any more than you could forget the water when you were very thirsty. Such persons, Jesus says, shall obtain the righteousness



they so much desire. They shall be filled. Their sins shall be forgiven, and they shall enjoy the favor of God. Thus you see it is not promised that those shall be christians who only have some faint desire to be such, but those who desire the forgiveness of their sins above all other things will be sure to obtain it.

Jesus next says, the *merciful are blessed*; for they shall obtain mercy. These are the persons who pity others in distress, and try to relieve them. I suppose there is no one who reads this, that has not had opportunity to pity, and perhaps to relieve some one in distress. Have you been merciful? If you have just said to some sufferer, "I am sorry for you;" or if you have given him something which you did not want; or something which belonged to your parents—you cannot be sure that you are truly merciful. We should be willing to deny ourselves for the sake of others; that is, give up the things we like, for the relief of the needy. Those who do this, Jesus says, shall obtain mercy. We will need the mercy of our Heavenly Father; not only the daily mercies of his Providence, but that special mercy which saves sinners that are lost. We have sinned against God all our lives, and must have our sins forgiven, or be lost forever. If we should begin to serve him from this moment, and should hereafter keep all his commandments, still we should do no more than our present duty, and could make no amends for the past. We could do nothing towards paying the vast debt which we owed to God before we began to serve

him. Thus you see we should need the mercy of God if we could become christians of ourselves at this moment ;—but this we cannot do. His mercy must turn us into the right path ; his mercy must keep us from going astray again into the paths of sin ; and his mercy must blot out, and forgive all our past transgression. Think of this, and as you wish to obtain the mercy and forgiveness of your Heavenly Father, be merciful and forgiving yourself.

“Blessed are the *pure in heart.*” You understand, no doubt, that the heart is the seat of the affections. Love and hatred come from the heart ; and the emotions of the heart influence the conduct. Just as the heart feels we shall speak and act. Now if our hearts are pure, that is, if they are free from wicked thoughts and feelings, Jesus says we “shall see God.” We shall enjoy his favor, and feel that he is very near to us. We shall love to think of him, and shall observe him in all his works around us. The sun, and moon, and stars, the green earth and moving waters, will speak to us of God ; and we shall love to examine the things he has made, and admire his skill, and power, and goodness. We shall see his hand in all the events of our lives. If we enjoy prosperity we shall feel that it comes from God, and be grateful to him. If our friends die, and we suffer other afflictions, we shall see a kind Father behind the cloud that hangs over us, and still rejoice in him. Above all we shall see God in his work of redemption. We shall feel how lost we were when he came to save us, and our gratitude will awake, and we shall long to be like God, and dwell with him for ever.

And, finally, if we are pure in heart we shall see God our Saviour in heaven, and rejoice in his love in the ages of eternity. Will you examine your own heart, and see if you are among the number who shall see God?

In the next verse Jesus says, "Blessed are the *peace-makers*; for they shall be called the children of God." Peace-makers are those who strive to make every body happy around them by keeping all in peace. I have known but few peace-makers among children. They are apt to take a great deal of care of their little companions, and inform other children what they say and do, not so often for the sake of making peace, as for the sake of making contention. Think how much good may be done, by striving to keep all your young friends in love with each other, and if you see any difficulties between them, do all in your power to restore peace. Your home or your school cannot be like heaven if you have any contentions there; and you cannot be the children of God if you do not seek to make peace. Peace-makers shall be called the children of God, because they are like him. God is the author of peace. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace; and wherever his spirit is felt it banishes war and strife, and brings peace.

Jesus next speaks of those who are *persecuted for righteousness' sake*; which means such as are sneered at and injured, because they are righteous. At this time in our country, christians are not often persecuted in the way they were in ancient times. Perhaps you have read of the Quakers or Friends who were hung in New England many years ago, because they chose to worship God in the way

that they thought was right; or of Roger Williams, who was banished from his home, and driven into the wilderness, on account of his peculiar religious views. Baptist ministers were whipped and shut up in jail in Virginia for preaching the gospel. These people were persecuted. Perhaps at this time very young persons, who make a profession of religion, are sometimes persecuted by their former companions. This is because it is not common for such youth to join the church, and perhaps the wicked ones think they cannot be true christians. I once sat down to commemorate the death of our Saviour with a church where there were several lads among the communicants, one of whom was not more than eleven years old. My thoughts were soon interrupted by a noise in the gallery of the house, and looking up I saw some very wicked boys who had once been the companions of those who had joined the church, creeping around, and trying to see the little church members; and when they got where they could see them sitting with the pious men and women; and with a meek and thoughtful countenance, taking the bread and wine which the deacon handed them, I saw these very wicked boys point at them, and make a sneering laugh. These boys felt the spirit of persecution; the same spirit which caused the wicked people to stone to death the first christian martyr, Stephen, of which you can read in the seventh chapter of Acts. "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." They shall enjoy the happiness of the righteous. It would not be right to seek persecution, but if our christian profession and pious life bring upon us the ill-will of those who hate religion, it is an evi-



dence that we are the followers of Christ; and we may therefore take for our own the promises he gives his children, and hope to enjoy heaven with him hereafter.

“Blessed are ye when men *shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake.*” Observe the word “*falsely*” in this passage. When people speak against us without cause, but for the sake of reviling us, and injuring the cause of religion, they do it falsely; and though we should pity them, we need not be distressed on our own account. Nay, so far from being distressed, Jesus says in the next verse we should “rejoice, and be exceeding glad.” That is, rejoice that we are considered worthy to be treated thus for his sake, because he will not allow his friends to suffer anything on earth for which he will not reward them in heaven. In this manner he says wicked people once persecuted the prophets who lived many years before;—and they, no doubt, are now reaping their reward in heaven.

Now we have looked carefully through these twelve verses. They are the words of the Saviour who knew the hearts of men. Think again who are the persons that he says are happy. Are they the same that you have looked upon as the happiest ones around you? Have you thought when you saw people meek, quiet, and benevolent; seeking to make others happy; and seeming to think very little of themselves—that such persons were the blessed? If you have called the rich and powerful the blessed, remember these words of our Saviour, and call them so no more. Again, will you look



into your own heart, and see if you find these pious exercises there. Remember, that the same person who is poor in spirit will mourn for sin, and be meek, forgiving, merciful, and peaceful; and he will long to be pure in heart, and will hunger and thirst after righteousness; and then he will be very likely to be reviled, and if he bears it patiently his reward will be great in heaven. These twelve verses describe the feelings of a christian. All these excellent dispositions are found in some degree in the heart of every true follower of Jesus, though it is often the case that one of them is seen more plainly than the others. Do you find these dispositions in your own heart?

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## CHAPTER VI. .

### THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9—13.

9. After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11. Give us this day our daily bread.

12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. '

13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

PRAYER is speaking to God. In the verses above we have a prayer which our Saviour gave his disciples as an example for them to copy. He says, "After this manner pray ye." Not that we should always use these words; but this is the substance,

the spirit, the feeling, which should always be felt and spoken by us when we pray. Have you thought, my young reader, what it is to pray? I have seen many children bow their heads in the Sabbath school, and repeat together the Lord's prayer; I have seen them kneel with their parents around the family altar; and in the public assembly I have seen them stand quietly listening while the minister offered prayer to God—but it may be very few of all these children really thought what they were doing or how they should feel. Prayer is an offering of the heart; it is telling God the truth. *We* may call it prayer, but the great and holy God does not, unless our thoughts and feelings are all taken away from earth, and raised up to him in our words. When we bow before God, we may remember our friends only, to ask him to bless them; we may remember ourselves only, to think that we are sinful and unworthy, and must be lost without his pardoning mercy; but our minds should be filled with thoughts of the majesty and purity, the mercy and love of our Creator; and we should at the moment we are bowing before him, give ourselves away to him entirely, and be willing that he should do with us, and with all who are dear to us, just what he chooses to do. If we come before God with this spirit, and with these exercises of mind, and pray to him with such feelings, he will accept our worship, and listen to our requests.

We may raise our thoughts and feelings to our Heavenly Father even in a low whisper, and he will understand and answer us. When your parent or minister is offering prayer, you should lift your thoughts to God, adopt his words, and express in

your mind the same feelings that he utters. If you do this you will pray, but if you merely repeat the best of words, even the Lord's prayer, without thinking what you say, or without raising your thoughts to God, it is not an acceptable prayer.

Now let us attend carefully to the example of prayer which Jesus gave his disciples: "*Our Father.*" Here we have a name given us by which we may address the mighty God; and what a fond, endearing name it is! *Our Father.* Every one of us may claim this relationship, because he has made us all, and we are his children. "In him we live, and move, and have our being," and he is watching over us every moment, and taking care to supply all our wants, as a mother watches over a helpless infant to see that it is always comfortable and happy. "*Who art in heaven.*" Heaven is the place which is filled with the presence of God, because all is happiness and love there, but this expression does not mean that God is only in heaven. He is *every where*. Read the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, and you will feel that it is impossible to escape the eye of God, or go to any place where he will not be looking at your heart, and understanding all your feelings. God is every where. "*Hallowed be thy name.*" This means that all the inhabitants of the earth should worship God, and that his name should never be spoken of, or thought of, without fear, and praise, and honor. Very many of the beings whom God has placed on the earth, men, women, and children, appear to forget their Maker entirely. They rise in the morning without thanking God for his preserving care; attend to their business or their

pleasure all the day, without lifting one thought to him ; and at night they lie down forgetful of Him who has been watching over them, and giving them all the blessings they have enjoyed ; and who might easily call away their spirits, and cause them to sleep the sleep of death before the rising of another sun. Such persons do not hallow the name of God. There are others who think of God, and often speak of him, but not with reverence. Some openly profane his name, others speak of him in a very light and careless manner. I once heard a little boy in the time of a tempest, while the lightning was flashing around, and the thunder rolling through the sky, speak some wicked words about the noise that God was making over our heads. He was repeating something that he had heard some very wicked men say, and he smiled, and seemed to think it was witty ; but I do not think he would have thought so, nor would he have dared or wished to use such language, if he had felt the spirit of the Lord's prayer. This boy did not hallow the name of God. When we pray, one of the strong desires of our hearts should be that all men should reverence and honor the name of the great and holy God.

*"Thy kingdom come."* A kingdom has three parts, a king, subjects, and laws. The king rules, and the people have to obey him. Jesus is king in Zion. This whole world, where you and I live, belongs to God, but the people have turned away from his government, and have chosen to disobey him, and indulge their own wicked dispositions. When we say "thy kingdom come," if we really pray, we desire and ask that all who are opposed



to God on earth may become his friends. And when we say, "*thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,*" we pray that every thing wicked may be driven from the earth by the gospel and spirit of God, and that every being here should obey God's holy laws, and love, and peace, and happiness be enjoyed, and God be praised and honored here just as he is in heaven. It should be noticed, that before we ask for personal favors, we are taught to pray for the spread of the gospel and the conversion of the world. This should teach us that the kingdom of God should have the first and highest place in our thoughts and prayers. "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" We should ask for such earthly comforts as we daily need, but we may not ask for honors, or riches, for this world is not our home, and we should not seek to lay up treasure here. "*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*" Our debts are our sins, or our transgressions of God's holy law; and we should always feel, especially when we come before our Heavenly Father in prayer, that we are sinners, and must have his pardon or forgiveness, or be lost for ever. "*Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*" These expressions are a petition that God would keep us from every thing that will lead us to forget his commandments, and entice us to do wrong. Let us never forget that we have within us such evil hearts, that we shall be led by every bad example, and continually grow worse and worse, if we are not guarded and guided by the spirit of God. "*For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever.*" If we truly feel these words when we speak them in prayer, we



acknowledge the right God has to reign in us, and over us, and through all the world. If we truly feel these words, our spirits bow before our Maker, and we worship him as the angels do in heaven. "*Amen.*" This word at the end of the prayer means "May it be so." Jesus therefore said in one word as he closed the prayer, "My heart approves it all."

I told you, dear reader, that prayer was an offering of the heart to God. This examination of the Lord's prayer shows us what kind of offering it should be. Are you prepared to pray in this manner? If not, still it is your duty to pray, not with the lips only, but with the heart. All prayer to God must be made in the name of our Saviour. God cannot hear and answer the prayers of any sinful being, only through Christ as a mediator and intercessor. All our offerings to God must be presented in HIS NAME. How can you learn to pray aright? None but God can teach you. Study his word, believe in Jesus as your Saviour. Ask him to give you "a clean heart, and a right spirit." Ask him to "search you, and try you, and see if there be any wicked way in you, and lead you in the way everlasting." You need not fear to come to him in the name of Christ, for the Bible says, "If ye," that is earthly parents, "know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST.

MATT. vi. 28, 29.

8. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

IN the same sermon in which Jesus tells us what are the dispositions of christians, and gives us an example of prayer, he speaks the words which you see above. He had been warning his hearers against laying up treasures on earth—that is, seeking all their happiness in earthly things, and telling them to take no anxious thought about their food, when he says, “And why take ye thought for raiment?” that is clothing. “Consider,” or think of, “the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.” As if he had said, “Look at those sweet flowers springing out of the hard, rough ground, and rising without noise, labor, or care to open their beauties to the sun. Look at their soft-shaded leaves, and see how gracefully they bend upon the stem. They have taken no pains to be thus beautiful; and here they are, sprinkled all over the face of the wide field, for any one to look at and admire. Why should you be taking anxious thought about your dress? When your Heavenly Father takes care to clothe the humble lily with so much beauty, will he not also take care that you have such clothing as you need?”

In the next verse Jesus adds, "And yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Solomon was a very rich king, of whom we read in the Old Testament. He lived in great splendor, and probably wore the most elegant and expensive garments that he could purchase with silver or gold. He was so famous for his splendid style of living, that a queen who lived in a distant country traveled a long journey, with a vast train of servants and camels, to see him, and look at the wonders of his house; and when she had examined them she acknowledged, that though she had heard a great fame of him in her own country, the half had not been told her. Yet Jesus says, that Solomon in all his glory—in the most splendid period of his life—was not arrayed, or dressed so beautifully as one of these modest little flowers.

And what lesson do you think our Saviour taught, when he thus spoke of the lily, and compared it with the rich king? He knew what feelings were in the hearts of his hearers, and he knew too what would be in the hearts of men, women, and children at this time, when we live on the earth; and he intended to show us how unnecessary it is that we should be very anxious about our clothing; and to show us also how foolish and wicked it is to be proud of dress.

I suppose few, if any, of my young readers have ever suffered for fear you should not have *comfortable* clothing—but I suspect many of you have felt very anxious that your clothes should be *fine and beautiful*. Do you think I judge without reason? No, not without reason, because I know that children and youth generally take pleasure and

pride in the same kinds of things; and as I do not know one little friend of mine who does not often discover much pride in dress, I think it must be the same with all children. Perhaps all persons are more ready to commit some sins than others. These are called their easily besetting sins, because they are so easily led to commit them. I should think pride in dress was an easily besetting sin to children; and if it is so they should watch very carefully against it. Think for a little while of the sin and folly of being proud of dress. All pride is sinful. We are poor, dependent creatures, and may not call even our breath our own. All we are, and all we enjoy, comes from God, and our employment should be to praise and worship him. But the feeling of pride in our hearts leads us to exalt ourselves, and wish to have others notice us, and think more highly of us than they ought to think. It leads us to forget God whom we should love and worship, and make idols of ourselves. Pride, therefore, this very pride in dress, may be the means of ruining the souls of those who indulge it. Think of the folly of such pride. We take something which God has caused to grow very beautiful, or something which he has taught man to make beautiful from those things that he has first caused to grow, such as the silk-worm's thread, the wool from the sheep, or the cotton from the pod, and place it on our bodies, and then feel proud, as if we deserved praise for wearing the beautiful colors and soft silks which the skill and goodness of our Heavenly Father have provided for us. Do you not see the extreme folly as well as wickedness of this pride, and will you not learn

from this time to despise and hate the feeling when it rises in your breast? Again, if our dress is ever so beautiful, it is wrong for us to be proud of it; but it may be that we do not know what is truly beautiful. Perhaps we should have thought Solomon's splendid dress much more beautiful than the lily; but Jesus, who judged right in all things, said that the king in all his glory was not arrayed like the lily. Dr. Watts, a good man, who wrote beautiful hymns for children, has taught them to say,

“The tulip and the butterfly  
Are dressed in gayer clothes than I;  
Let me be dressed fine as I will,  
Flies, worms and flowers exceed me still.”

Surely we have no reason to be proud of that in which the insects and flowers may excel us. And then think how soon these bodies, which we take so much pride in dressing, will be laid away in the grave, and need no garment but the plain, white robe, and this will lead you to take no anxious thought about your raiment, but only to desire that it may be neat and comfortable.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST.

MATT. vii. 24—27.

24. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock :

25. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it was founded upon a rock.

26. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand :

27. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall of it.

THAT part of our Saviour's preaching which is called "the sermon on the mount" extends through the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew, and contains so much excellent instruction, that if no other words of our Saviour had been preserved for us, these would have been sufficient to guide us to heaven. I hope, my young reader, you have read them with attention many times, and I hope the Spirit of God has taught you to understand and feel the truth and wisdom which they contain.

The verses above are the closing part of this sermon. After Jesus had been teaching the people how to conduct towards each other, and towards their Heavenly Father ; how to live a useful and happy life, and die a peaceful death, he concludes by saying, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine," &c. Whosoever means any person. Any

of the people who were gathered around him on the mountain, or any person who reads his words now; you who read this little book, or I who write it. "These sayings" means the precepts or doctrine which he had just been delivering to them, and which are written for us to read in these three chapters. "*And doeth them.*" Here is the difficulty and the danger. It was no doubt very easy for those people who heard Jesus preach to listen to his words. Perhaps they took pleasure in looking on his heavenly countenance, and were charmed with his mild, persuasive voice; and it may be they were even pleased with his pure, benevolent doctrine while they heard him speak, but when they went away to their homes, I fear many of them did not do as he directed them. It is easy for us to read these sayings of the Saviour, and while we read them our hearts acknowledge that they are good, and we know it would make us happy to obey them, but do we remember to do them at all times, and in all places? If we *do these sayings* we shall indulge in no anger; we shall swear not at all; we shall love, not our friends only, but our enemies also; we shall be kind and obliging to all around us, and do by others just as we would like to have them do by us; we shall not give half our thoughts to the world, and half to God, but it will be our first desire to please our Heavenly Father. This would be doing the sayings of our Saviour; and he says of the person who does them, "I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock." To liken, is to compare, or represent one thing by another. The Saviour was so kind and condescending that

he often taught his hearers about spiritual things, such as they could not easily understand, by comparing them with natural things, such as they saw around them. At this time, to make his instructions plain to those who heard him, and plain for you and me who now read them, Jesus used the comparison of the two houses, one built on a rock, and the other on the sand.

A house, you know, is a dwelling to keep us safe and comfortable. It is not built for one day merely, but we prepare it for night and day, for winter and summer, for the fair and the stormy weather; and here we take our furniture and our families, and call it our home. Should not such a building be placed on a firm foundation? The wise man, our Saviour says, built his house on a rock, and when the rain descended, the winds blew, and the floods came, though they beat upon that house it fell not, because it was founded upon a rock. Now, my dear reader, the truths of the Bible, especially the doctrine of Christ, and the instructions of our Saviour, are a rock on which you may build your spiritual house—your house for eternity. You may hereafter encounter many storms; the floods of adversity may beat upon you; but if you are built on this rock, if your faith and hope be fastened to this foundation you can never fall, because Jesus will love, protect, and keep you safely by his mighty power.

In the twenty-sixth verse, Jesus compares such persons as hear his sayings and do them not, to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. This man, too, designed his house for a place of safety and comfort. He carried thither his dearest

friends, and his most valuable property. He meant it should long stand for his secure and happy home; but, O how unwise he was to build it on the sand! In the calmest days of sunshine it was no more pleasant than the wise man's house, which he had placed on a rock, and when the first heavy wind came it began to totter, and ere long, when "the rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew, it fell, *and great was the fall of it.*"

Let us think what this falling house, with all its beauty and grandeur, with all its vast treasures of life and happiness within, is made to represent. The loss of an immortal soul! Jesus teaches us by this familiar illustration that those who love and obey the precepts of the gospel, that is, those who believe in Jesus and take him for their Saviour, will be safe and happy through all the trials of life, and even in the hour of death; but those who trust in any other righteousness than that of Jesus Christ will be lost for ever. No wonder that Jesus said of the foolish man's house, "Great was the fall of it." To build our hopes of heaven on a false foundation, and find ourselves deceived at last; to feel that our soul, which can never die, has taken its final portion with the lost, must be a fall so fearful that even the Saviour's illustration does not enable us fully to realize it.

Dear children, if you live long on earth, you will find many things to entice you to build for eternity on the sliding sand. The vanity of the world, your gay companions, and your own wicked hearts, will lead you to depend on some other foundation than the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Besides this, you are in danger of neglecting all



religion, and thus scarcely thinking on what foundation your house is placed until the storm begins to beat, and then it is too late. Now, while you are very young, trust in the Saviour, and ask him to guide you through life, and prepare you for the happiness of heaven.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### JESUS TEACHING IN PARABLES.

#### *The Parable of the Sower.*

MATT. xiii. 1—8.

1. The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea-side.

2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow:

4. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came, and devoured them up.

5. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6. And when the sun was up they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them.

8. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.

You here perceive, my young friends, that Jesus seated himself by the sea-side, that is, by the shore of the sea of Galilee; and that "great multitudes were gathered together unto him." In the last chapter you may learn that the Pharisees sought to



destroy the Saviour, but great numbers of the people who lived in that country did not feel like the Pharisees. They believed that Jesus was a great and good Teacher, though I suppose they did not all know that he was the Son of God. They felt that he spoke with wisdom and love, and believed that he was able to work miracles, therefore they followed him from place to place, and listened to hear when he spoke, and asked him to heal them when they were sick. So many people collected around the Saviour as he sat on the sea-shore, that he went into a ship and sat, while the whole multitude stood on the shore.

You have thought of Jesus as he sat on the mountain side, preaching the gospel of peace to the multitude; now think of him, still ready to do good—anxious that all who came might hear his word; leaving the land, and going into a vessel instead of a pulpit, so that the people might gather along the shore, and all be able to hear. The sea-breezes gently play around the ship, while his sweet voice echoes across the moving waters, and the waves ripple along the pebbly shore,—while men, women and children stand eagerly gazing on his mild countenance, as they treasure up the gracious words that fall from his lips.

“He spake many things to them in parables.” Perhaps you do not understand what a parable is. It is a kind of story, natural in its parts, and told to show, in a plain and interesting manner, some important truth. In our country it is not common to speak in this manner, but in Asia, where the Saviour lived, it was very common. The parable is that of the sower, and shows, by the seed on

four kinds of ground, the effect of preaching and teaching on four different classes of hearers. "*Behold, a sower went forth to sow,*" &c. I once read to a little friend of mine, and said to him, do you understand this parable? "O yes," said he. He was a very small boy, and I thought he might be mistaken, and so I said, are you sure of it? He answered, "Yes, I am sure, because I found it explained in the same chapter." I was glad that the dear child had read his Bible with so much attention. Have any of my readers observed the explanation which our Saviour gives of this parable? If you have, I am glad that you too read the Bible with attention; if not, I wish you would now take the Bible, and turning to the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, read from the eighteenth verse to the twenty-fourth.

When the farmer sows the seed which produces grain, he throws it around in different directions, and as he scatters it, some falls in good places, and some in bad. This seed which the sower casts around, our Saviour says, represents "the word of the kingdom," that is, the gospel which he taught, and his disciples taught in his name. The fowls which came and devoured the seed represent the Wicked One. That evil being who first brought sin into the world, and who now is seeking to make us all as wicked as himself; he catches away the truth from the hearts of all those who are not anxious to keep it in their minds, just as a hungry bird devours the grain he finds scattered on the ground. We are told that some seeds fell upon stony places, and they soon sprang up, but when the sun was up they were scorched; and because they had

no root they withered away. This represents such persons as are glad to hear the gospel when it is first preached to them; but they do not really love it. They receive it with joy, but are not truly converted, and when a time of trial comes, they fall away, they are offended, forsake the cause, and go back into the world. The seed that fell among thorns, represents such people as have their understandings and consciences convinced of the truth of the gospel, but suffer the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, to choke the word, so that it becomes unfruitful. They at first listen to the gospel, and it appears to take some root in their minds, but they love the riches, pleasures, and honors of this world so well that they cannot be willing to become disciples of the meek and lowly Saviour; and so they give up the hope of heaven for worldly good.

Jesus tells us that some seed fell on good ground and brought forth fruit, not all the same quantity, but all fruit of the same kind, and such as the sower approved. These represent true christians, such as really love and obey the Saviour. The fruit is those graces of the Spirit and good works which show that they endeavor to follow the example of Jesus, and make every body happy around them. "Some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold." The christian, whose heart is full of love to God, will so strive to honor and serve him that he will bring forth much fruit; while others may truly love him, and yet not feel so much love as to lead them to be always active; besides, some have more health, some more talents, and some more influence, and some more money than

others, and these help them to do good. This fruit is much like children's obedience to their parents. A very affectionate child will be watching every opportunity to do that which will please his father, and cause him to look on him with a smile, and if he has an active mind, and enjoys good health, he can do more to serve and honor his father than another child can who does not enjoy these blessings.

Among those who were standing on the shore to listen to this parable, perhaps there were some of all these four kinds of hearers. Of those who read this parable now, no doubt there are some of each of these classes. Jesus did not speak of it for the instruction of that people only; but for you and me. He knew that we should live at this time, and he knew what kind of hearts we should have, and this was written to warn us against despising and neglecting the "Word of the kingdom." To which of these four classes of hearers would you choose to belong? It is of little consequence which it is, if it be not those represented by the good ground that brought forth fruit. You are among those that hear the word if you have never read any more of the Bible than you find in this little book. Will you soon forget what you read, or what you hear from the minister and your pious friends; and so be like the ground in which there was no deepness of earth for the seed to take root in? Or will you suffer the amusements of life to fill your mind, so that there will be no room in your heart for Jesus, and no time left to devote to his service? Will you not rather choose to be among those who love the words of Jesus; those

who believe in him, and trust in his righteousness, that you may in early life bring forth fruit to his honor and glory.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE MIRACLES OF OUR SAVIOUR.

#### *The Leper Cleansed.*

MATT. viii. 1—3.

1. When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2. And, behold, there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

3. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

IF you have read the New Testament through, or if you have read but a few chapters in the first part of it, you have found some account of the miracles which Jesus performed. Have you thought what a miracle is? I will try to tell you. It is an event contrary to the common course of nature, and one which the power of man cannot cause. Perhaps if you have read the Acts of the Apostles, you will remember that Paul and Peter and other Apostles wrought miracles; but did you observe that they did it in the name of Jesus of Nazareth? And never since the days of the Apostles have the followers of Christ been taught to perform miracles in his name. I told you a miracle was not like a common event. When our friends are sick, the physician gives them medicine, and we use every



means in our power to restore them to health. If God blesses these means they recover, but this is not a miracle, because it is the common method which God has taught us to use, and one which he often blesses. But if a person should cure our sick friend in a moment, without using any means, it would be a miracle; and we should know that the person who performed it must be very powerful; we should think that Jesus had come back to earth, or had sent one of his holy Apostles to work in his name.

We sometimes have violent winds, but they do not rise in a moment, nor die away in a moment; so when the sailors who are out on the ocean perceive the wind to be rising, they take in the sails of the vessel, and prepare every thing for the gale. If she ride safely over the mighty billows, and suffer no injury from the storm, she is not preserved by a miracle; but because God has caused the wind to go down as usual, and has blessed the means which he taught the sailors to use, to save themselves from sinking in the deep. Now if some person in the midst of this fearful gale had spoken to the wind, and by a word had hushed its fury, so that the waves were quiet, and the winds were still in a moment, it would have been a miracle, and we should have been convinced that the person who thus controlled the winds must be the God who made them, or one of his servants to whom he had given special power.

I was once walking out on a very windy day with a little boy who was about five years old. He had just begun to read the Bible, and his mind seemed much impressed with the miracles of which

he read in the New Testament. As the wind beat strongly against us so that we could hardly walk, the little boy kept saying very soberly, "Peace, be still, peace, be still," but after a moment he turned to me, saying, "The wind will not obey *me*, but it obeyed Jesus Christ." This child felt, though he was very young, that the Saviour must be very powerful, because he could make the winds obey his words: so the people felt who saw his miracles; and so we should feel when we read of them.

The Saviour performed these wonders, in the first place, to convince us that he is the mighty God; and if we can read of them and not feel convinced of this, it is because we are hard-hearted and unbelieving. In the second place, he wrought miracles to do good. He loved to make people happy, and when he cured sick people, and opened the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, by a miracle, he gave them ease for pain, light for darkness, and hearing for deafness, in a moment. If you now understand what a miracle is, and also the most important reasons why our Saviour wrought so many miracles while he was on earth, we are ready to examine the verses above.

We are told that a great multitude followed Jesus when he came down from the mountain, and among them was a leper; which means a person diseased with the leprosy. We know but little about the leprosy in our country, but in the eastern part of the world it was a most loathsome and distressing disease. In many cases physicians could not cure it, and the persons who were afflicted with it were obliged by the law to go away from their friends, and live in some desolate place,

that others might not take it of them. Then, after suffering a great deal, sometimes for many years, they must die alone, with no friend to watch over them and soothe the last hours of life. A person having this fearful disease preying on his body, had heard of Jesus Christ. It may be he had listened to his "Sermon on the Mount," or he had heard of some miracle which he had wrought. He knew that Jesus was both good and great, for we are told in the second verse that he came and worshiped him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." It is very probable that he came trembling along, thinking as he approached the crowd which surrounded Jesus, "O, how happy I should be if this dreadful disease, which will soon bring me to the grave, was cured, but I dare not hope that this benevolent stranger will notice me among this vast multitude, even if I can get near enough to speak to him." But he felt the pain and distress of the leprosy, he thought of his past sufferings, and looked forward to the anguish of future years; he believed that Jesus was able to cure him; and as he pressed his way onward he thought, "I must die if I do not ask Jesus to heal me, and I cannot meet anything worse than death if he refuse;" and thus he came and knelt before the Saviour. And now think of the compassionate Jesus, who never had any home on earth, but who spent his life in going about over mountain, valley, and lake, to do good to the family of man. Think how he turned to the poor leper as he cried, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean," and stretching forth his hand to touch him, immediately answered, "*I will*, be thou clean." What

could the anxious leper hope for more than this? He might have feared much, but he could hope for nothing more. What joy thrilled through his heart as he heard the ready answer, "*I will;*" and the next moment he was a well man. "And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." A moment before his eye was heavy, and his cheek pale; his limbs were feeble and weary; and it was heavy labor even to draw his breath: now his countenance sparkled with joy; his blood flowed with quiet and healthful motion; and his limbs felt the sprightliness of childhood. A moment before he was expecting to be banished from his friends, and pine away in loneliness; now he could carry them the joyful intelligence that he was well. Does not this miracle show you very plainly both the power and the mercy of Jesus Christ?

I knew a young lady who became a teacher in the Sabbath school, while she had thought but little of the character and works of Jesus Christ. As she was teaching her class from the New Testament, she was led to think much of the miracles recorded there. Her mind was impressed with the mercy and benevolence of the Saviour, and while speaking to the class the thought came into her mind, that she had never seen any account that Jesus ever refused to heal any distressed person who came to him; and then proposed to her class to look through the four first books during the next week, on purpose to see if there were any such account. While examining the evangelists through in this way this lady began to think how lovely and excellent the blessed Jesus is, and she saw that it was very ungrateful and wicked not to



love him with all the heart. She saw that she was a great sinner, and therefore she knelt before the mighty and compassionate Saviour, and asked him to pardon her sins, and give her a new heart and a right spirit. Jesus taught her to love him, and after that she was better prepared to be a Sabbath school teacher. May this study of the miracles of Jesus Christ lead my young readers to love and serve him.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MIRACLE OF GIVING SIGHT TO THE BLIND.

MATT. ix. 27—30.

27. And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

28. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30. And their eyes were opened.

IN the eighth and ninth chapters of Matthew, we have accounts of a great number of miracles which Jesus wrought. He cured diseases, cast out evil spirits, stilled the tempest, and even raised the dead;—but we will now turn our attention to a miracle in which he opened the eyes of the blind. As Jesus was passing through the country, and people were coming to him from all directions, two poor blind men heard of him.

Have you ever thought what it is to be blind?



Just close your eyes for a moment, and suppose that they are sealed up for ever. Never again could you behold the light of the sun, nor look forth on the beautiful gardens and fields that surround your home. Never could you read the Bible, or any good book you love. Never, never behold the dear countenances of your parents, or the joyous faces of your brothers and sisters. You could not go and come as you now do in all the careless freedom of childhood, but you must feel your way with slow and cautious steps, or be led by the hand of another. Yet though all this would be very distressing, you would be able to remember much that you have learned, and you could think how the earth, and the friends you love, once looked; but those who are born blind can think of nothing that they have ever seen. I once knew a family in which there were eight children, and four of them were born blind. Could you have looked into their mother's room, and seen the four blind children sitting sad and solitary, while their brothers and sisters were flitting away to school; or could you have seen them eagerly listening to catch the first sound of their voices on their return, and then have seen them asking those who had been to school, to tell them all they had learned, that they might learn it too;—I am sure you would feel that it is a great affliction to be blind, and a very great blessing to enjoy sight.

Now think of the blind men that followed Jesus. They could hear as quick as others; and all around them was the sound of many voices. Some were crying out with distress, and pressing their way through the crowd to come before the Saviour

Others were passing by them who had been to Jesus, and were now shouting with joy that they had been cured. Perhaps the happy leper, as he returned to his friends, spoke in hearing of the blind men, of the wonderful cure that Jesus had wrought for him. All this would cause them to feel still more anxious to come to the Saviour, and yet they could not hasten, for the next moment they might run against some person or thing, and be thrown prostrate on the ground. How distressed they must have felt! Never before had they heard of one who could open the eyes of the blind, and now they feared he would pass away before they could approach him, and they could never come near him again. Yet there was one thing they could do: they could raise their voices, and this they did, crying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." Son of David was one name by which the Saviour was called, because he was descended from David, a king, and good man, of whom we read in the Old Testament.

We learn from the twenty-eighth verse that the blind men did not overtake the Saviour till he came into a house, and then he said to them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord." They had not followed him with the cry, "Have mercy on us," without believing that he was able to do that which they desired. "Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you." That is, according to your belief in my power and willingness to heal shall you receive. "And their eyes were opened." O, how much happiness instantly flowed from this one act of the benevolent Saviour!

How did these men rejoice in his power and compassion. Now they might return to their homes full of joy; and though they would not know the faces of their dearest friends, they would find them by their voices, and soon learn to look with pleasure on their countenances. And then, how much happiness they would find in examining the works of God in the new and interesting scenes around them; and how much pleasure in learning to read, and gaining a knowledge of God from his Word. We who have always enjoyed sight, do not realize how much happiness we derive from the use of our eyes, nor am I able to describe to you the blessing which Jesus imparted when he gave sight to the blind; but if any one should read this who was once blind, he will know it well. In these days people who are born blind are sometimes cured without a miracle, because learned men have examined the cause of their blindness, and have very skilfully taken off a film which in some cases grows over the sight. I once saw a little blind boy, whose friends were taking him to the "Eye Infirmary," hoping his sight might be restored. If he has obtained his sight, and I hope he has, perhaps he will read this, and he can tell his little friends far better than I can, how happy the blind person is who receives his sight: yet there is this difference; that little boy, or any one whose sight is restored in these days, must suffer a painful and dangerous operation before he can see; but Jesus cured these men by a touch.

Jesus, my young friend, pitied the infirmities of our bodies, and loved to give comfort and happiness to those who were distressed; but this was not

his great errand on earth. He came from heaven to earth to heal our spiritual diseases, and cure our spiritual blindness, and though I know not that I write to any who have been naturally blind, I know all my readers have been, or now are, spiritually blind. That is, as the Bible says, we are all born in sin. We have no sight to perceive the beauty and excellence of holiness. We do not love the Saviour, who is "the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely." This blindness Jesus came to cure. Will you not come to him as the blind man did? Ask him in prayer to show you how excellent and lovely he is, and make you his meek and humble follower while you live, and prepare you to dwell with him when you die.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE MIRACLE OF HEALING THE WITHERED HAND.

MATT. xii. 10—16,

10. And behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

11. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

12. How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.

13. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

14. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

15. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from



thence : and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all ;

16. And charged them that they should not make him known.

It appears that our Saviour sometimes visited the Jews' meeting-houses, which were called Synagogues, and he was in one of these places at the time that he wrought the miracle mentioned in the verses above. "There was a man which had his hand withered." He was affected by some distressing disease which had caused his hand to wither or shrink up, and now it hung useless by his side. Do you think Jesus will pity this man, as he did the leper and blind man? O yes, Jesus not only healed those who were suffering much, but all who were diseased. We are not told that the man even asked the Saviour to cure him, but it is said in the thirteenth verse that Jesus said to the man, "Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole like as the other." It was the wonderful power of God which gave strength to the hand which a moment before was entirely useless. Here again our Saviour did good, and produced happiness by working a miracle. But I wish you to notice particularly how some of the people were affected by the benevolent deeds of our Saviour. Perhaps you have thought while you have been reading of his kindness and compassion, "If I had seen him I know I should have loved him. I should have asked him to be my friend, and make me well if I was sick, and give me a new heart, and teach me how to pray. I should have delighted to journey with him around the country, and see him make



the people happy by healing their diseases." I hope, my young reader, that you *would* have been among the number who did believe in Jesus, and love him, and desire to serve him—but do not feel too sure that you would. There were many who lived in those days that called themselves good people, and yet were offended at the mighty works of Jesus, and did not believe he was the Son of God.

In the tenth verse, after it is mentioned that there was a man with a withered hand, we are told, "*They* asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? that they might accuse him." *They*, refers to the Pharisees, who are mentioned before in the chapter. These were a sect, or denomination among the Jews, who thought themselves very good people, much better than others, because they were strict to observe certain ceremonies; but Jesus, who knew their hearts, saw that their goodness was all outward show, while their feelings towards him, and towards every thing good, were much more wicked than those of others who did not profess to be good. These Pharisees, it appears, had been watching to get some opportunity to accuse the Saviour, and have him put to death; and now, when they saw him cure a man on the Sabbath, they thought they had found sufficient reason. Poor, wicked men! How vile their hearts must have been to wish to destroy him who went about doing good, him who came from heaven to earth to save the children of men from being lost for ever. Observe how wisely Jesus answered them. The Pharisees thought it right to take a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath day, but a man, woman, or child, they

said should not be healed on the Sabbath, unless they were in danger of immediate death. This was a part of their religion, but Jesus showed them that a man was of far greater value than a sheep, and that it was lawful, because it was right, to do well on the Sabbath day. Then, without fearing the wicked Pharisees, he healed the withered hand. We should think, if they were not convinced by the words of Jesus that he was the Son of God, they must have been by the miracle which he wrought in their presence; yet it was not so; their hearts were too stubborn to believe, and we learn from the fourteenth verse that they "went out and held a council against him how they might destroy him." Ah, little did they think that he whose death they were seeking was not only listening to their words, but looking into their wicked hearts also!

Jesus had come into this world to die for sinners, and he knew that the Pharisees and many others would hate him, but this did not take away his pity and love. When he had finished his preaching, and performed all his miracles, he would be ready to die on the cross by the hands of wicked men—die for his worst enemies, even for the proud, self-righteous Pharisees—but the time had not yet come; many more sick people must first rejoice in his healing mercy, and many more sinners rejoice in believing, through listening to his gracious words; therefore, as we are told in the fifteenth verse, "He withdrew himself from them;" that is, he went away from that part of the country where the Pharisees were plotting to destroy him; but he did not hide himself from

those who were sick and distressed, for we are told in the same verse that great multitudes followed him, *and he healed them all*. Not one was sent home filled with sorrow and disappointment, but all rejoicing in his mercy and power. In the sixteenth verse we learn that he charged those whom he healed that they should not make him known. As he was not yet ready to be offered up, he did not wish the Pharisees, or any other wicked people, to be enraged, by hearing of the wonders he wrought, therefore he charged those whom he cured not to talk much about it, and tell who had healed them, and then his enemies would not know where he was, and could not interrupt his good works.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE MIRACLES OF WALKING ON THE WATER, AND STILLING THE TEMPEST.

MATT. xiv. 22—33.

22. And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves; for the wind was contrary.

25. And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, it is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28. And Peter answered him, and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32. And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33. Then they that were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

WE read in the first of the verses above, that Jesus constrained his disciples, which means that he urged them, to go before to the other side of the Sea of Galilee; while he should send away the multitudes of people that followed him. His love and compassion were so great, and he found so many distressed beings in our sinful world, that he could scarcely find time for prayer and rest. Although our Saviour was the Son of God, he had a body like our own, and felt weariness and hunger just as we should. At this time he had been healing the sick, and feeding the multitude during the day, and now he wished to be alone; therefore, he dismissed the people to go to their homes, and sent his disciples across the lake without him. Jesus had no home on earth where he could go to find comfort and rest, for he says in the ninth chapter of Luke, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head;" but he loved to resort to the quiet mountain for rest and prayer, and we learn from the twenty-third verse that when



the evening was come he was in the mountain alone.

Perhaps you would think it a great misfortune to be left alone for one hour. Among all my little friends, I do not recollect one who is fond of being alone. I hope some of them pray in secret, but this occupies but a short time, and they soon come forth from their closet, and join again in the conversation of their friends. Our Saviour loved to be alone, and I think if all of us, even children, love to be alone sometimes, that we may think of God and of our own hearts, we shall become more like him. When we are called away by death, our dearest friends cannot go with us. We must die alone. Is it not well then sometimes to feel as if no other friend was near but Jesus? for in the hour of death no other friend can comfort us.

We have in the New Testament many accounts of our Saviour's prayers. In one place a long prayer is recorded, which he offered just before his death, and this shows that he did not go away from his disciples nor the multitude, because he wished to forget them; for he there prays for others more than for himself. Never did he forget the sinful beings whom he came to save. Never did that love grow cool which led him to leave heaven, and share the sorrows of earth.

At this time, though he sought to be alone for a season, he was still watching over his disciples. In the twenty-fourth verse, we learn that the ship in which they had embarked, was now "in the midst of the sea tossed with the waves." It is probable that they were alarmed, for it is a fearful



thing to be out in a frail vessel, reeling and tossing over the mighty waves; and to feel that the next moment we may be dashed against the rocks, and find ourselves struggling for life in the midst of the angry waters. Jesus knew the feelings of his disciples, and so he left his retirement on the mountain, and at the fourth watch of the night, which is nearly morning, he came to them "walking on the water." This, you know, was a miracle, for no one but he who made the waters could cause them to bear up a person as he walked over them. It does not appear that the disciples had one thought that their best friend was so near, but when they saw Jesus coming towards them they were still more alarmed, and even cried out with fear, as children do when they see some danger near. They supposed they saw a spirit, that is, a being from another world. Perhaps they thought it was a spirit from the wicked world, and certainly such a being would be a very unwelcome visitor; but they need not have feared, neither should you and I fear such beings if we are good, for God will not suffer them to injure us.

How mistaken they were to think they had cause for alarm when Jesus was coming so near! It is sometimes so with us when God comes very near to us to take away our friends by death, or when he causes us to endure severe sickness; we are alarmed, and do not at first realize that it is our Heavenly Father. Yet it is our best friend who is approaching so near us, and though we may not feel sure of it at the time, he is doing that which is best for us.

Notice in the twenty-seventh verse, how tenderly

Jesus spoke to his disciples. He did not wait to keep them long in fear, wondering who he was, but "straightway," that is immediately, said, "Be of good cheer," which means be cheerful and happy. "It is I." It is your Saviour who loves you, and who has power to protect you from all danger. "Be not afraid." Now their fears were all gone in a moment; and Peter was so joyful and courageous that he wished to go out on the water to meet the Saviour. Jesus said unto him, "Come," and it appears that he did walk on the water until he saw the wind boisterous, when he was afraid, and as he began to sink, he cried out, "Lord save me." It was well for Peter that Jesus was ready and willing to save immediately. He had come hastily down from the ship, and ventured himself on the mighty deep. The wind was boisterous, the waves rolled fearfully around him, and now he felt himself fast sinking beneath them. If Jesus delayed to help him, but for one moment, it would be too late. But his compassionate Saviour was always ready to save. He needed not that the sinking Peter should call on him a second time, but "immediately stretched forth his hand and caught him," saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" When Peter first asked to walk on the water, and when he first came down from the ship, I suppose he trusted in Jesus to give him power to perform a miracle. He knew that Jesus could enable him to walk on the water, as well as he could walk on it himself; and he went forward trusting in the power of his almighty Saviour; but when he saw the wind boisterous, his faith, that is his trust in Jesus, became weak;

his fears were stronger than his faith, and that was the reason he began to sink. None of us should expect Jesus to save us, unless we trust in him, and believe that he is able to do for us all that we need for this world, and for the world to come.

Jesus called Peter a person of little faith. He had some trust in the Saviour, though it was not so strong as it should have been. He yielded to his fears when he began to sink, and yet he had sufficient trust in Jesus to cry, "Lord, save me." If we feel that we are sinners, and need the pitying love of Jesus, though our trust in him may be faint, he will pity our weakness, and stretch forth his powerful hand to save.

In the two last verses above, we learn that when the Saviour and Peter were come into the ship, the wind ceased, and the people who were in the ship came and worshiped Jesus, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." They had seen him coming to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on the moving water as if it had been the solid land. They had seen him enable Peter to walk on the water also, and when he began to sink they saw him stretch forth his hand and save him. Now they saw him calm the tempest in a moment, and hush to rest the raging of the mighty billows. Many of those who were in the ship had before seen the Saviour's wonderful works; but every new miracle was a new proof to them that he was God, and they desired to acknowledge him as the greatest and the best of beings. "They worshiped him." That is, they bowed down before him with reverence and awe, saying,

“Of a truth,” most certainly, “thou art the Son of God.” We should worship none but God. Our parents, and other kind friends we should love, honor and obey, but it would be wicked to worship them. Our Heavenly Father we should love, honor, and obey—but towards himself he requires more than this, we should worship him. All his creatures to whom he has given reason are wicked if they do not worship him. Does this account of the wonderful works of Jesus Christ lead you to say to him in your heart, as the disciples did, “Of a truth thou art the Son of God?”

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MIRACLE OF FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

MATT. xv. 32—38.

32. Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat : and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

33. And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude ?

34. And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye ? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

35. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37. And they did all eat, and were filled : and they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets full.

38. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children.

It appears that our Saviour spent much of his



time, delivered many of his sermons, and performed most of his miracles, in the open air; and often in what is called a desert place, that is a place where there are few inhabitants. For this, there might have been several reasons. The Pharisees, you know, were seeking to destroy him, and as he was not ready yet to give himself up into their hands, he chose to avoid them. Another reason, perhaps, was that the people might all be accommodated who came to listen to him. No building, or any open field among the houses, would be large enough to contain the thousands of people who followed the Saviour. He was at this time on one of the mountains near the Sea of Galilee, and this was a convenient place for all the people to stand, so that they could listen.

You learn from the first of the verses above, that Jesus said to his disciples, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat." The people had left their families, and their business to go into the wilderness, and while they were seeing his works, and enjoying his heavenly teaching, hour after hour had passed when they scarcely knew it; and now, three days had gone by since they left their homes. They had probably taken some provisions with them, but these were all used up, and they expected to obtain nothing more till they could return. Some of them had walked many miles from their home; some we know had brought their sick friends with them, for we have an account in the thirtieth verse of the same chapter, that "they brought those who were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them



down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them, and some, it may be, had brought their little children in their arms for Jesus to give them his blessing; all had now been a long time away from the comforts of their homes, and yet they must take a tedious journey before they could rest and refresh themselves. Jesus pitied these people, as he pitied all who were suffering, and he said to his disciples, "I will not send them away fasting, (that is without taking food,) lest they faint in the way."

The disciples were astonished that he should think of supplying so great a multitude with food, out in the wilderness, where there were no shops to buy, and no gardens to gather it from. Jesus asked how much food they had there. They answered, "seven loaves, and a few little fishes." This was very little, probably not enough for themselves; but when Jesus had commanded the multitude to sit down, he took the loaves and fishes, and gave thanks.

Here, my young reader, is an example which you should be careful to imitate. Perhaps your father, or the friend with whom you live, offers thanks to God, and asks his blessing on your food whenever you sit down to the table, which his love and care have supplied—if so, do not fail when he is speaking to raise your heart in devout gratitude to your Heavenly Father. If not, if your friends collect around the table, and partake of the good things which God has given you, without expressing thanks to him, you need not therefore neglect or forget to thank him. Never forget that God looks at the heart, and will accept your silent thanks, though he will not be pleased if you forget

him when you take your food, for he has said by his apostle, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

When Jesus had given thanks, he brake the bread and gave it to his disciples, and they passed it all around among the vast congregation of people seated on the side of the mountain. "And they did all eat and were filled." Not one of all the number was neglected; not one desired more. After they had eaten, seven baskets full of the broken food were gathered up. In one account of such a miracle as this, we are informed that Jesus said to his disciples, "Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost." If he had not said this, we should know by the example given us here that it is not right to waste food, even though it be but the broken remains of our meals. Surely children will notice this example of the blessed Saviour, and be very careful to imitate one which it is so easy for them to follow.

Until we come to the thirty-eighth verse, we do not know how numerous the company was which Jesus fed with seven loaves and a few little fishes. "Four thousand men, besides women and children." Perhaps you do not realize how many people this would be. It is as many as there are in a large village. Enough to make more than four hundred families. All these were supplied with food, without any time or labor for preparing it. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and the Saviour could just as easily give the people food prepared to eat, as he could cause the grain to spring from the ground, and make the fire and water for us to cook with; but it is

not common for him to do this, therefore it was a miracle.

Does not this account show you the love, and care, and compassion of God? Does it not lead you to feel grateful for the ten thousand proofs of his loving kindness and tender mercy by which you are surrounded? Besides the common blessings, without which you could not be comfortable, think of the many things you have to enjoy which you could do without, and still be happy. But your Heavenly Father not only intends that you shall be happy, but *very* happy; therefore he made the flowers to perfume your path, and the birds, and the rustling leaves, and the bubbling brook to delight your ears. Therefore he dressed the green earth in beauty, and spread above your head the spangled curtain of the heavens. Therefore he made the music of your mother's voice, and the sweet smiles of your brothers and sisters, and the hallowed tones which convey your father's counsels.

“ At work, at play, at home, abroad,  
How often I should think of God !  
And all the time I ought to try,  
To please my Father in the sky.”

## CHAPTER XV.

### OUR SAVIOUR'S RULE OF FORGIVENESS.

MATT. xviii. 21, 22.

21. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.

FROM the first of the verses above, we learn that one of our Saviour's disciples came to him with a request that he would inform him how often he should forgive his brother, if he sinned against him. By his brother, he meant any person with whom he associated; and, by sinning against him, doing that which injured him. At the same time that he asked the question, he seemed to fix on seven as the greatest number of times he ought to grant forgiveness. Peter was a christian, and we cannot suppose he wished to cherish revenge. No doubt he felt disposed to be forbearing and forgiving; but the love, and pity, and forgiveness of the Saviour exceeds that of the best of men, "as far as the heavens are higher than the earth." See what a rule he gave to his disciple, and to me, and you also. "I say not unto you, until seven times, but, until seventy times seven." If the same person offends you hundreds of times, you should forgive him, and feel towards him just as though he had never injured you.

I have had very large acquaintance with children of all ages, and it seems to me there is nothing



more needed among them than forgiving dispositions. To forgive your companion is to excuse him entirely for having injured you, and not wish to have him punished, nor desire even to remember that he has ever done wrong. But children often seem anxious to have their companions corrected, if they suppose they have done them the least injury. I have known a boy even choose to be punished himself, that his companion might be punished too, rather than settle the difficulty between them by forgiveness. Little children, three or four years old, will sometimes remain sullen and stubborn for several minutes, before they can be persuaded to kiss each other, forget their little quarrels, and go lovingly to play together. This shows that an unforgiving spirit is deeply rooted in our nature, and that children ought, as soon as they are able to read the Bible, to study the rule which Jesus has given us.

One of my dear little friends, who has gone before me into eternity, used to remember this rule. He was once standing by me when I was talking with a little boy who had been striking his companion, because, as he said, he had hurt him. I was trying to lead him to understand and feel that he should not injure another because he had injured him, when the child whom I first mentioned, said to me, "he should forgive him if he hurt him seventy times seven." Where did you get that rule? said I. "In the Testament," he answered. "It is our Saviour's rule." It gave me much pleasure then to know that my little friend remembered so well the words of Jesus Christ, and it gave me still greater pleasure to observe that he



was not one of those children who are unwilling to forgive.

It is very common for children to say, when called to account for injuring their companions, "Well, he injured me." As if they were entirely innocent, and fully excused for doing wrong to one who has done wrong to them. But this is a rule they have made, and not the Saviour. He says, "Resist not evil." "Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you." "Forgive," not seven times, but "seventy times seven." Do you think, my dear reader, that you will ever be able to follow these rules? You will find it very hard, if you have a companion who is so wicked as to wish to make you unhappy, to keep forgiving him, and trying to love him as well as if he had never offended you. Yet if you would obey the Saviour, and have him for your friend, you must endeavor to forgive; and if you find your heart hard, and unwilling to obey the rule, you should ask God to give you a forgiving spirit.

Remember how often you do wrong, and need the forgiveness of others. Your parents, your brothers and sisters, and all with whom you associate, it may be, find much in you which needs to be forgiven; but especially think how often you offend your Heavenly Father, and need his forgiving love. All sin is exceedingly offensive to God. He cannot approve of any action or thought which is not pure, entirely free from sin; but our thoughts, and every action of our lives are defiled by sin; so that if God dealt with us, as children sometimes wish their companions to be dealt with, we should now be suffering punishment, instead

of enjoying mercy. But God deals with us in great mercy, and never, in this life, punishes us as our transgressions deserve; although he is grieved that we are so in love with sin, and so willing to disobey him. If we are sorry for our sins, and believe in Jesus, and give ourselves away to him, he will not remember that we have offended him, and will love us as freely as if we had never been his enemies. Ask Jesus to give you his spirit; and make you obedient to all his rules, and then you will be kind, affectionate, and forgiving to all around you.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### OUR SAVIOUR'S LOVE FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

MATT. xix. 13—15.

13. Then there were brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.

14. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

WE have seen that multitudes of men and women were constantly coming to the Saviour, as he went about doing good, and we know that children were among the vast number that he supplied with food on the mountain; but we have not yet noticed anything that Jesus said to little children. You will learn from the verses above that his love and mercy were not all bestowed on grown people. "There were brought unto him," that is to Jesus, "little children." It is probable the parents, or

some other kind friends to the children, led or brought them to Jesus. Many of my readers know well that if the Saviour were now on earth their fond, pious parents would wish to lead them to him. Many, I hope, have parents who daily ask the blessed Saviour in prayer to look in pity on you, and make you his obedient children. These parents, though they lived more than eighteen hundred years ago, and lived too many thousands of miles from this country, loved their children as your parents love you; and the little ones were the same kind of playful, thoughtless little creatures as we see every day; sometimes doing wrong, and sometimes right, and each of them needing that Jesus should give them a new heart and right spirit. We know not the age of these children. In Mark they are called young children, and in Luke infants; but neither of these expressions is used in Scripture to denote particularly either very little children, or those of considerable age. They only mean any age of childhood. Perhaps some of these little ones were of the age of some who are able to read this book.

It appears that the disciples thought it very improper to bring children to Jesus, and they rebuked or reprov'd those who brought them. I suppose they thought it very intrusive to bring little children to the mighty Saviour, and request him who was able to work miracles to notice them; and it may be that the parents were hastening away with their children, afraid that Jesus too would rebuke them. But Jesus was not like man. He loved every human being. The lame, the blind, the sick, the tender little ones all shared in his love

and compassion. And Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." As if he had said, "Do not send little children away from me. Let them gather around me. I love them. I love to take them in my arms, and teach them, and give them my blessing." And then he adds, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." This means perhaps, that such persons as are christians, and finally enjoy heaven, show while on earth mild, teachable dispositions; and look up to their Heavenly Father to guide them in all things, as little children depend on their parents for direction.

In the fifteenth verse it is said, "He laid his hands on them, and departed." In the same account given by Mark it is said, "And he took them up in his arms and blessed them." He gave the children the blessing which their parents asked for them. In the thirteenth verse it is said they brought them "that Jesus should put his hands on them and pray. We learn from the Old Testament, and from other ancient books, that the Jews thought very much of having the ceremony of laying the hands on the head with prayer performed by a prophet, or pious teacher. Perhaps it was this kind of blessing that the friends of these children sought for them; but it may be that they believed that Jesus was able to give them new hearts, and prepare them for the happiness of heaven; and it may be that the Saviour bestowed on them this blessing, even if their friends asked only that they might enjoy health, and the happiness of this world.

We are sure that Jesus blessed them, and we



know that any blessing from the wise and holy Saviour is very precious—but as we look back on this lovely group of little ones, and see them gathering around the meek, benevolent Saviour, we cannot bear to think that their friends sought for them any blessing less than the best of blessings—"the pearl of great price." Of all the children who have ever lived on earth they were the most highly honored; and we cannot bear to think that they should be brought to the Saviour's arms without the prayer being offered by their friends, (if they were too young to pray for themselves) that they should receive his spirit, and become his children. And when we think of you, dear children of this christian country, children of the Sabbath school, we cannot bear to think that you should live, where you hear the doctrines of Jesus spoken by his ministers, and have his word to read every day, and are invited to ask his blessing in prayer, without seeking first of all that best of gifts which he alone can bestow. Jesus says, "Seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness." And the wise Solomon, who was inspired by God, says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

Your pious friends, your Sabbath school teacher, and the minister who labors for your good, have all commended you to Jesus. You have been brought to him by the strong desires of your friends, as these little children were, that he may bestow on you his blessing—yet do not depend on this. See what encouragement this account affords you to come to him yourself. The same kind Saviour who took these children up in his



arms, and blessed them, though the disciples frowned upon them, is no less willing to receive you. He is watching over you every day, and giving you all the good things you enjoy. Will you not lay down your book at this moment, and go away where none but God can see you, and ask the Saviour to take you for his child, and make you such an one as he can love.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE RICH YOUNG MAN.

MATT. xix. 16—22.

16. And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19. Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21. Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

22. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

A PERSON came to Jesus calling him "Good Master," and desiring to be informed what good thing he could do to obtain eternal life, or be taken to heaven when he died. From the twentieth and twenty-second verses we learn that this

was a young, and a rich man, and from the account of the same circumstances in Luke we learn that he was a ruler, or a person of more than common importance among the Jews. Let us think for a few moments of this interesting young man. He had all that he needed to procure such happiness as this world can afford. He might spend his time in gathering instruction from books or in traveling to see the wonders of the world. He looked forward to many happy years to come, for he was yet young, and had not felt any weariness of life, nor begun to suffer from disease and disappointment. Yet in the midst of his worldly enjoyment, no doubt the thought sometimes crossed his mind that by and by the day of death would come, and he must leave all his riches, and go away into another world. He heard of a religious teacher who was able to direct the people of this world to the place where all is peace and joy, and no fear of death can enter. This teacher was Jesus Christ. The young man turned aside from the pleasures of life, and followed the multitude which constantly pressed around the Saviour. He made his way through the crowd, and coming near to Jesus, addressed him as you have read above.

The expression, "Good Master," was one which the Jews commonly used when addressing a religious teacher, and the young man did not use it because he knew and believed that Jesus was truly good. Our Saviour knew this, and he therefore said to him, "Why callest thou me good?" Not that Jesus was unwilling to be called good by those who spoke sincerely; but this man did not know his real character; he said "good master"

in a flattering manner, as he was accustomed to speak to the proud Pharisees, who loved flattery. But the benevolent Saviour, though he did not like the manner in which the young man addressed him, still attended to his question, saying, "If thou wilt enter life keep the commandments." The Old Testament, you recollect, was at this time written, and the Jews had it in their houses, the young man therefore knew what the law of Moses required, but he wished to know what part of it he must keep. Jesus was so kind as to repeat to him several of the commandments which we have in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. The young man answered, "All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" Perhaps he really thought he had kept all the commandments, and Jesus did not dispute him, but he proves to us, and I think the young man too must have seen it, that he had deceived himself, and was far from being as good a man as he thought himself. He thought he had done many good works, and was nearly perfect; but if he lacked anything, Jesus could inform him what it was, and he could perform it, and soon fit himself for heaven. But this is far from being the way to prepare for heaven. We should be constantly doing good deeds, but we should not expect to purchase heaven by them. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." We must love Jesus, and trust in his righteousness, if we would have eternal life.

In the twenty-first verse the Saviour says, "If thou wouldst be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me." It is repentance

and faith in Jesus that prepares us for heaven, but our works show whether we have this faith in our hearts. Jesus says, "If ye love me keep my commandments," and this young man soon showed that he had not the love of Jesus in his heart, because he was not willing to obey him. "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Now we see that though he thought he loved his neighbor as himself, he was not willing to part with his possessions for the benefit of others. To give up his riches, and follow Jesus with the poor disciples, and have no home on earth, and no employment here but that of doing good, was more than he was willing to do, even though he was assured that he should have treasure in heaven.

I suppose my readers are all much younger than this man was, and it may be you have not yet begun to love riches, for children think less of great possessions than of pleasure and amusement; but if you live long you will find that the love of money, and of all the fine things which money can purchase, is a sin that clings close to the heart, and often causes people who give themselves up to it, to turn away from religion as the rich young man turned away from Jesus.

"He went away sorrowful," disappointed that he could not obtain eternal life by doing some good deed, and still enjoy his riches. He was not sorry that his heart was not right with God, but sorry that the Saviour's rules were so strict. Poor young man! Does not your heart pity him as you think how he turned away from Jesus, and went back to seek all his happiness in the fading plea-



tures of this world. He was one whom God had blessed with all the good things of this life, and now he had been favored to see the Redeemer of the world, and even to speak with him, and ask him the way of salvation. Had he been willing to be taught of Christ, as a little child is taught by its parents, he would soon have found it easy to give up his possessions and follow him. Jesus would have given him a disposition like his own, meek, lowly, and contented; and he would have found the happiness of serving God far greater than all he had enjoyed with his riches. But he made a wretched choice. Is my reader willing to follow such an example?

You will find many temptations besides the love of money to draw your heart from God, but do not forget that you must leave all and follow Jesus if you would have treasure in heaven. You cannot follow him as this man might have done, by going around with him to do good, but you can give yourself to him, and ask him in prayer what he would have you do; and you can follow just where his word, and the good spirit he puts in your heart, may direct. The Bible says, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul." To lose the soul, my dear children, is to lose every thing. It is to go away into the world where wicked beings are, and be eternally miserable without one hope of ever leaving that dreadful abode.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

MATT. xiv. 1—12.<sup>3</sup>

1. At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

2. And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead ; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

3. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison, for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

4. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

6. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

7. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

8. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

9. And the king was sorry : nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.

10. And he sent and beheaded John in the prison.

11. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel ; and she brought it to her mother.

12. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

WHILE Matthew is writing for us an account of the preaching and miracles of our Saviour, he has occasion to tell us of the death of John the Baptist. This, I hope you recollect is the good man whom God sent to prepare the way for Jesus ; and he who baptized the Saviour in the river Jordan. Above, we are told that Herod the tetrarch, that is a ruler of the country, heard of the fame

of Jesus, and he did not know he was, but thought it must be John the Baptist risen from the dead.

We have not a particular account of the life of John, but we know he was a good and faithful minister, who suffered a violent death in consequence of giving a just reproof to a wicked man. From the third verse we learn that Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him and put him in prison, for Herodias' sake, his brother's wife, whom he had taken for his wife. John had plainly and courageously told him that it was not lawful for him to have another man's wife. Wicked people are not often willing to be told of their sins, and this enraged Herod so that he confined John in prison; though he did not then dare to put him to death, because he feared the people, who thought John a very good man.

After the pious minister had been taken from his friends, and shut up in the gloomy prison, it appears from the sixth verse that Herod's birthday was kept. Those who are rich and powerful can easily command the celebration of birthdays, or any other outward ceremonies of honor; but money cannot purchase, nor power command, the love and respect of those who know them—nothing can secure these but a lovely deportment, and kind, benevolent actions. I doubt not many more people truly rejoiced in the birth of John the Baptist, who was that day pining in his solitary prison, than there were that could rejoice in the birth of Herod the tetrarch: but there were many in the palace of the ruler to feast and dance, and *appear* to be very happy in celebrating his birthday, and among these was a young lady who was the

daughter of Herodias. This young lady amused Herod so much by her dancing, that at the moment when his feelings were so excited that he hardly knew what he said, he promised with an oath to give her anything she should ask him.

No doubt she was both surprised and delighted with such a promise, but it seems she was ready, being before instructed by her wicked mother, to ask that she might have the head of John the Baptist brought her in a charger, or kind of dish. It is probable that Herodias had been cherishing a spirit of revenge towards the good man who had reproved her for her sin, and now she rejoiced in an opportunity to gratify it. There was nothing in all the dominions of Herod that she so much desired as the head of John the Baptist.

Herod had made a very rash and foolish promise, and we learn from the ninth verse that he was sorry; but because he had taken the oath, and the people who sat at meat with him had heard it, he commanded it to be given her. Herod hated John, but because he feared the people, or from some other reason he did not wish to take his life at that time; and when he made the promise, I suppose he had no idea that a young lady would ask such a cruel thing. Yet it appears that he felt bound by his own wicked promise rather than by the law of God. A wicked promise should be repented of and broken, or given up, just like any other sin. It is going still deeper and deeper into sin to oblige ourselves to keep a promise which we see was wrong. Herod had long been adding sin to sin, and now he had promised to be a murderer. O miserable man! Think of him, and

Herodias, and her daughter, as the executioner was sent out to bring them the head of John the Baptist. True they were in a splendid palace, surrounded by every thing costly and elegant, and attended by servants who were ready to obey even the glance of their eye, and followed by pretended friends, always ready to smile and flatter, to obtain their favor; but do you think these wicked people were happy? Would you be willing to take the place of either of them, even that of the young lady, the most innocent of the three? Would you not rather be in the place of the pious servant of the Lord who was about to have his head severed from his body?

Let us think for a moment how it was with him. He was sitting in a dark lonely prison, perhaps without bed or chair to rest on, and with scarcely food enough to eat; bound, perhaps so that he could not walk the length of his cell; but the heart you know is the seat of happiness or misery, and do you think John felt guilty and distressed in mind? O no. The good man, I doubt not, was rejoicing in God, and thinking of the happiness of heaven. He could not, like Jesus, know when his work on earth was finished, but he could feel perfectly willing that his Heavenly Father should take all the care of him, and if it was His will he chose to go out and preach again to the people; and if he had done all his duty on earth, he was ready at any moment, and by any means, to leave his body on earth, and go to live with Jesus. When the executioner sent by Herod appeared in his prison, and told him to lay his head on the block, he knew his work on earth was



done, and we cannot suppose that he delayed one moment to obey him. True he was called to endure a distressing death, but a few moments at most would close his sufferings, and his happy spirit would be received to heaven, and his pained body would lie senseless and unfeeling, not even knowing whether it was surrounded by the cold, damp walls of a prison, or the magnificence of a palace.

We learn from the tenth and eleventh verses that the executioner went and beheaded John, and brought his head and gave it to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother. Would you, my young reader, have been in the place of Herodias' daughter at this time? She has danced with so much grace and sprightliness as to please the king, and now she receives the reward he promised her—the head of a good man severed from his body, and placed in a charger for her to carry to her wicked mother. Could she enjoy this reward? She was young, and perhaps beautiful and accomplished, but she must have had a hardened, cruel heart, if she could bear to take the vessel which contained the bleeding head, and carry it to her mother. O, I should think she could never wish to dance again; and through her whole life it seems to me she must have thought with solemn, awful feelings of that good man.

The wicked spirit of revenge which Herod and his wife had cherished towards the faithful minister was now gratified. In the midst of a birthday feast they had paused from their mirth and revelry to look at the good man's head, and now they were



sure that he was dead, and could not speak to reprove them again. But do you think they were happy in their sin, because they knew John was not watching over them? No, indeed. Their hearts told them that God still watched all their thoughts and actions, and they felt guilty and distressed in the midst of their splendid pleasure. This I know is the case with all wicked people, but I am sure that Herod felt guilty, because it is said in the second verse that he said of Jesus, "This is John the Baptist, risen from the dead." He knew nothing about the Saviour, but when he heard of his mighty works, and of his preaching so much like John's whom he had beheaded, he feared that he had risen from the dead. It was his guilty feelings that made his thoughts turn towards John with the fear that he had returned to earth. Poor, wicked ruler! He knew not that God had sent one far mightier than John, his beloved Son, who came to reprove all the world of sin, and to die that the vilest sinners might be saved.

Much instruction may be drawn from this account of the death of John the Baptist. See how one sin leads on to another. Herod was at first guilty of breaking the seventh commandment, and when he was reprov'd for this, he was at length led on to commit murder, and thus he broke the sixth commandment also. We may, too, learn from this account, that neither our birthdays or any other days should be given up to feasting and amusement. We may notice our birthdays, and celebrate their return by grateful acknowledgements to our Heavenly Father for the mercy that

has sustained us; and by enjoying the cheerful society of our friends, who on these days love to present us tokens of their affection; but we had better never know when our birthday returns, than keep it as the wicked Herod's was kept.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE DISPLEASURE OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS.

MATT. xxi. 14, 15.

14. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

15. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! they were sore displeased.

THE passage above does not present our Saviour on a desolate mountain, with a multitude gathered around him; nor sitting on a vessel's deck, with his hearers listening on the shore; but in the temple at Jerusalem, a most splendid building in the midst of a fine city. But still he is the same benevolent Saviour, seeking the happiness of all around him. The blind had felt their way into the temple, and drew near to ask his healing power; the lame had crept slowly over the spacious court, and climbed the lofty steps, to present their diseased limbs before him. Neither of them returned with disappointed hopes. Jesus healed them.

The assembly that now surrounded our Saviour was not all of such people as desired that he should

bless them, or those who wished to receive instruction from him. There were *some* who felt the need of his miraculous power, and these came to seek his favor; there were some who knew that he was the Son of God, and these came to worship and praise him as they ought. You will learn from the second of the verses above, that among those who offered praise to the Saviour, were children who cried in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Hosanna is an expression of praise, honor, and worship, here addressed to Jesus, whom they called the Son of David. O, how suitable that the arches of this lofty temple, built for the worship of God, should resound with the sweet voices of these infant worshippers; praising him who so loved them as to take them in his arms and bless them, who so loved them as to die to save them. Happy children! thus employed in early life. Whether they died in childhood, or lived to mature years, we have reason to hope that they were blessings to the world, and partakers of the joys of heaven. But there was still another class of hearers in the temple. The chief priests and scribes. These were both teachers of the Jews' religion.

The Jews were once the people whom God highly favored. He gave them his law and taught them by his spirit, so that they were the wisest and best people in the world; but after many years the Jewish nation departed from the law of God, and became a very wicked people—more wicked because they had enjoyed so many privileges, and chose to neglect and misimprove them all. At the time that Jesus came on earth even their

ministers were vile persons, and yet they professed to be very righteous, and appeared to think none so good as themselves.

As I was reading the New Testament through with one of my little friends, as we came to the last part of one of the gospels, he exclaimed in astonishment, "The chief priests and scribes do not like anything that Jesus does." This was very true. These Jewish teachers seemed to be constantly watching for some occasion to condemn the Saviour. Although they studied the ancient scriptures, which foretell the coming of Christ, and describe him meek and lowly, as he was; coming into the world to do good, and die for lost men; yet it appears that they did not understand what they read. They expected the Saviour to come to reign on earth with great worldly power, as a mighty king; and therefore, though they even saw the astonishing miracles which Jesus wrought, they would not believe that he was the true Saviour, because he was so humble in his appearance. But if they did not believe that he was the Saviour of the world, they could not help seeing that great multitudes followed him, and no doubt they felt afraid he would have more influence over them than they could have. This they could not bear, because they loved authority, and they were used to having the common people obey them. When they saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children praising Jesus in the temple, "they were sore displeased." The feeling which was in their hearts was not like that which the disciples felt when they rebuked those who brought little children to Jesus. Neither was it a slight



displeasure which would soon be forgotten. It was a malicious enmity towards the Saviour which led them to be planning how they could destroy the friend of sinners; the friend of all the sick and needy; the friend of little children. What wicked hearts they must have had! O give me the spirit which would lead me to join the children in crying Hosanna to the Son of David; but let me not partake of such a spirit as led the haughty scribes and priests to despise, reject, and condemn the Son of God.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### OUR SAVIOUR'S LAMENTATION OVER JERUSALEM.

MATT. xxiii. 37—39.

27. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.

38. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

JESUS had been preaching in the country of Judea, and gathering disciples from among the common people. His fame had spread far around, and many, very many, had found him to be a mighty Saviour, who could not only heal the diseases of the body, but give joy and peace to the mind. Now he had been working miracles, and proclaiming the gospel of peace in the city of Je-



rusalem. This was the capital of Judea, the city where the Jews went three times a year from all parts of the country to worship God after their manner. Here stood the vast and beautiful temple, one of the most noble buildings ever erected in any country. This temple was at first built by Solomon, the Son of David, and dedicated to the worship of God by solemn prayer and peace-offerings, which continued for seven days. Here too were many priests and scribes, who should have been devoted to the service of God, and ready to welcome his Son, Jesus Christ, whom they had taught the people to expect. But Jerusalem, with its thousands of inhabitants, was now a wicked city. Jesus had found in the house of God merchants who had brought goods there to sell, and were making, as he said, his "Father's house a house of merchandise." The priests, instead of believing in Jesus, and rejoicing that he had come on earth, were "sore displeased" at his miracles, and at the praise and worship offered him by the children. And Jesus says in the first of the verses above, that the people of Jerusalem killed the prophets, and stoned those that were sent unto them. For this great wickedness he lamented over them in the most pathetic language.

While the inhabitants of this splendid city were despising the merciful Saviour, and indulging in all their sinful pleasures, he could look forward a few years, and see the fearful destruction that would fall upon them. We learn from history that about forty years after Jesus uttered this lamentation, the city was destroyed in a most awful manner. To punish them for their sins God suf-

ferred a mighty army to come upon them, and lay the city in ruins, and destroy even the beautiful temple: while the poor Jews, who had rejected and crucified the Saviour, and persecuted and put to death many of his disciples, suffered greater distress than any people on earth ever suffered. Jesus could foresee all this when he said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! In Luke it is said he wept over the city as he uttered these words.

Think of the Saviour weeping over these wicked people to whom he came with a message of pardon and mercy, but they would not listen to him. He knew that there was an hour coming in which he himself had much to suffer, but for himself he did not weep. He wept for the impenitent Jews, who were not only bringing upon themselves dreadful sufferings in this life, but by their "hardness of heart and blindness of mind," were preparing themselves to receive everlasting punishment in the world where wicked spirits dwell. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." See what a beautiful figure Jesus uses to show us how he would have protected the people of Jerusalem. You have seen the kind and careful hen call her helpless little ones, and spread out her wings to shelter them. If the storm beats heavily upon herself, she does not shrink from it if she can but protect those she loves. So Jesus called the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and would have sheltered them from the punishment they deserved, *but they would not.*

This shows you the boundless love and compassion of the Saviour. The same mercy which caused

him to weep over Jerusalem is now extended to you. Jesus calls you in many ways to seek the shelter of his protecting wings. He has given you pious friends to counsel and guide you; he has placed you where you can attend meeting and the Sabbath school; he has given you his holy word to read, which is "able to make you wise unto salvation." Will you not flee to him for shelter, as the defenceless chickens run to the covering of their mother's wings? He is able to protect you through all the storms of life; and when you come to its solemn close, the hour of death, Jesus, and none but Jesus, can shelter you from the punishment which your sins have deserved, and transport you safely to the abode of everlasting happiness. With what tender sadness did he lament over the children of Jerusalem! O, let him not say of you, "How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

MATT. xxv. 31—34: 41, 46.

31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand,

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

You have read of our Saviour's coming into the world in the form of the helpless babe of Bethlehem. You have seen that he was poor and despised, followed by the common people, but rejected by the rich, learned, and powerful ones of the earth. He came in this holy, quiet manner, because he chose at that time to make such an entrance on earth, and not because he was not able to make the whole earth tremble at his coming. In the last chapter you were told that Jesus, after leaving the world would visit it again, and the verses above will inform you in what manner he will come, and for what purpose.

Jesus says, "When the Son of man," meaning himself, "shall come in his glory," that is, with great power and authority, "and all the holy angels with him," attended by a vast number of those good and happy beings, called angels, who live with the Saviour, and constantly wait on him and do his pleasure: "then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." A throne is the seat of a king or emperor, on which he sits while the people who obey him, gather around to receive his commands. By this you see that Jesus represents his second coming to be far different from the first. He will then come with awful majesty, not to be persecuted and crucified, but to be honored and obeyed. Every person on the earth will then



know that he is the Son of God. At his first coming, while he traveled over the mountains and valleys of Palestine; and healed the sick, and gave bread to the hungry; and chose for his most intimate friends some poor, ignorant fishermen; there were but few of the persons who saw him that really believed he was the Son of God; and thousands who have since read of him in the New Testament will not believe; but when he comes in his glory, we shall all believe, though it may be too late to repent.

“And before him shall be gathered all nations.” The millions of people who have ever lived in this vast world are but one mighty family. God is the father of them all. The dwarfish Greenlander, the giant Hottentot, the swarthy Indian, the sable African, and the lighter race to which we belong, God has made of one blood, and they are all his children. Before him will all these nations be gathered. Every person who is then living on the earth, and all who have ever lived on it, from Adam, the first of men, down to the child whose birth is just before the Saviour’s coming. In the fifth chapter of John, we are told that “the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.” And in the fourteenth of Romans it is said, “We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

But for what purpose are the dead called from their graves, and all the nations of the earth collected before the Son of man? “And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.” In the coun-



try where Jesus was teaching there were many shepherds, men whose business it was to take care of sheep, and that his disciples might understand him perfectly, he compared himself to a shepherd, and said he should separate the inhabitants of the earth in the same manner as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. Sheep are more gentle and useful animals than goats, and these are made to represent the people who have loved and served God while on earth; and the goats, such as have been disobedient. The right hand is considered a place of honor and approbation, therefore this place was given to the righteous. "Then shall the king," which means the Saviour, "say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Blessed, you know, means highly favored, and to be blessed of God must be the most perfect happiness we can enjoy. "Inherit the kingdom," that is, take possession of the enjoyment which has long been waiting for you; go with me to heaven, the place of perfect purity and peace, which has long been prepared for such as loved and obeyed me on earth.

After this thirty-fourth verse to the forty-first, which I wish you to take your Testament and read, because it is too long to put in this little book, Jesus represents himself as saying to the righteous that they had been merciful and kind to the distressed, therefore they are now treated with mercy. You know he said in his sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." In the forty-first verse, which you see above, we are told how the Son of man

will address the wretched people on his left hand, "Depart," go away, "ye cursed." If you can think what it is to be blessed, think again what is the exact contrast of blessed, and that is to be cursed. It is to be entirely miserable. If you look around you and think of the most unhappy, wicked being you ever knew, he is not among those upon whom the curse of God rests to the uttermost. He still enjoys many of God's good things, and may yet have opportunity to repent, and ask the forgiveness of his sins; but those to whom the Saviour shall say, "Depart, ye cursed," will have nothing more to enjoy, nothing more to hope, but every thing to suffer. They are told to go away into "everlasting fire." These words express a state of fearful punishment, such as we have no language to describe to you, nor any thoughts to picture it for ourselves. None know what it is but those who go there. May you and I never know. This place of wretchedness was first "prepared for the devil and his angels." Wicked beings who were once happy and good, but who lost their pure character, and became so wicked that God prepared for them the "everlasting fire," and the wicked inhabitants of earth must share it with them. Here, from the forty-first to the forty-sixth verse, which you may also read in your Testament, Jesus represents himself saying to the wicked that they had not obeyed him while they lived on earth, by treating all their fellow beings with mercy and kindness, as he required them.

Finally, in the last of the verses above, he says, "These," meaning the wicked, "shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous

into life eternal." The punishment of the wicked, and the reward of the righteous, are both to last for ever. Good people and bad will never be mingled together again as in this world, but each will live on, in joy or woe, without dying, or knowing any change of being.

I hope, my dear reader, you have not read this far in this chapter without reflecting that the subject is very solemn, and one too in which you are deeply interested. Not one of you can say or think, "it does not concern me," for every human being will then stand before the Son of man, and be finally placed on his right hand or his left. Did you observe that the nations were not judged according to their name or color, but according to their character? You now see around you very many distinctions. There are people of different ages, and different conditions in life. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant. Here are people from different countries, and of various religious denominations, but there only one distinction will be found, good and bad, but two classes, the righteous and the wicked. Jesus, who knows the heart, will need but to see if that be right, and the question will be settled.

Towards this awful, decisive day we all rapidly hasten. Every sun which rises and sets brings us one day nearer to it. What shall we do to prepare for such a day? Flee to Jesus, the friend of sinners. The same holy One who is to come with his mighty angels to judge the world, is he who took little children in his arms and blessed them, he who wept over Jerusalem, he who came from heaven to earth to go about doing good, pitying

all who were distressed, and preaching the gospel of peace, and finally dying on the cross for sinners. Though he has now returned to heaven, he still watches over the family of man, and is not willing that any should perish. If you give your heart to him you will be safe in the day of judgment, for he is able to protect you, and take you to dwell with him. He has said to such as love him, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also."

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE SAVIOUR BETRAYED BY JUDAS.

MATT. xxvi. 20—25.

20. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

21. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23. And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him : but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I ? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

In the next chapter, after Jesus tells his disciples of his second coming, he begins to speak particularly of his death, which was now drawing near. In the first of the verses above, we learn that at the close of the day, Jesus sat down with the twelve, which means that he sat at the table



with them, for we are told in the verses preceding this, that they were about to partake of the feast of the passover. The twelve disciples were those whom Jesus called to follow him. They had been with him in his labors, and had enjoyed the opportunity of seeing most of his mighty works, and had no doubt received special instruction from his lips. With these Jesus sat at the table, and as they did eat he said to them, "Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray me." To betray means to give up into the hands of enemies. Jesus, you know, though he was all goodness and mercy, had enemies. The chief priests and others had long been seeking to destroy him, and he had one enemy among those who professed to be his best friends. If you look at the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth verses of the twenty-sixth of Matthew, you will find that Judas, one of the twelve, had before this agreed with the chief priests to show them where they could find the Saviour, and for this wicked deed they promised to give him thirty pieces of silver. The other disciples could not see the vile heart of Judas, and they knew not who it could be that would betray the blessed Saviour into the hands of sinners. "They were exceeding sorrowful." We cannot wonder that their hearts were touched with sorrow. They had been astonished, and almost unwilling to believe that it even would be so, when Jesus had told them that he was to die by the hands of wicked men, but now when he told them that one of the twelve was to betray him, they were exceeding sorrowful; and not knowing but their own hearts had deceived them, and they were his



enemies, when they hoped they were his friends, they "began every one of them to inquire, Lord, is it I?" Matthew did not say, "Lord, is it Luke?" nor Mark, "Lord, is it John?" but each one suspected himself, and desired Jesus to search him, because he knew that what the Bible says is very true,—“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Jesus answered, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. In that ancient time, and in that far distant country, people did not take their food as we do. They used no knives, forks, or spoons, but each one took from the dish with his hand. Judas, it is probable, sat near the Saviour, and helped himself from the same dish.

After this, Jesus said, “The Son of man goeth as it is written of him.” That is, the manner in which I am to die is the same as is written of me in the scriptures. The prophets had foretold many years before this, that Jesus would be put to death by sinners, therefore all this was fulfilling scripture, yet it by no means excused Judas, or made his punishment any lighter. Jesus says, “Wo unto that man,” a curse will rest on that man, “by whom the Son of man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born.” O wretched, wretched Judas! He was once a joyful, innocent child. He had friends to love him, and he loved them in return. He enjoyed the beautiful earth, and rejoiced in the bounties of God’s providence. He became a man, and in the course of the changes of life, he met with Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps he could see in some measure that Jesus was lovely and excellent: it

may be that for a time he thought he loved him, but afterwards found that he had deceived himself. Perhaps he only followed him with the hope of worldly gain. We know not how it was, but we know, because Jesus said it, that he had better never have had any life, though he once had many things to enjoy, than to have lived to betray the Son of man. Judas never was a christian, though he had professed to be one of the Saviour's warmest friends. When he heard that the chief priests were seeking to destroy Jesus, it seems he was all ready to assist them. We cannot tell what motive led Judas to commit this vile act, unless it was the base passion of avarice, or love of money. The chief priests agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver, about fifteen dollars of our money, and for this paltry sum he was induced to betray Jesus, the friend of sinners, into the hands of those who thirsted for his blood.

Do not suppose that this wicked man ever deceived the Saviour. No, he might deceive himself, and all his fellow-beings who knew him, but Jesus he could never deceive. He knew from the first that one of his professed friends was a hypocrite, and would become a traitor; but he suffered it to be so. Perhaps it was allowed to be so to teach the disciples, and us who read of them, what wicked hearts men have, and how easy it is to deceive our fellow-beings.

Now look again at the verses at the beginning of the chapter. In the twenty-fifth, it is said Judas at length asked the same question that the others had, "Master, is it I?" We know not why he should ask this question, when he must have re-

membered what he had already agreed to do. Perhaps he hoped by this means still to deceive the disciples, and it is possible he even hoped to deceive the Saviour, but when Jesus answered, "Thou hast said," which means yes, he must have felt that he was dealing with one who could look into his heart. From the account that John gives of this transaction, we may conclude that Judas went out immediately after this.

Before the chapter closes, from the forty-sixth to the fifty-first verse, you will find an account of his coming with a multitude of men sent with him by the chief priests, armed with swords and staves. As these men did not know Jesus when they saw him, Judas agreed to give them a sign that they might take him, and that sign was a kiss. This false friend went up to the holy Saviour, and said, Hail Master, and kissed him, and then the armed men laid hold on him.

After this, Matthew mentions Judas but once. In the next chapter, from the second to the sixth verse, you will find the last account of him. It appears that he could not enjoy, nor even keep, the money for which he had sold his Saviour. He brought it back to the priests, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." As they did not choose to take the money, or trouble themselves about the Saviour's innocence, he threw down the silver and went out—went out to what, my reader? Could that man find any place of happiness on this fair earth which God has given to his children, after he had betrayed the Son of God? Could he find any peace after he had declared himself the enemy of his Maker?

No. No place of happiness, no peace, and therefore he added another to his awful list of sins. "He went out and hanged himself." After the struggles of death were over, could his spirit find any place of happiness or rest? No. The eye of that God whom he had offended was still upon him, and among those who are for ever lost, we must think of Judas as one of the most wretched. Let his history teach us to examine our own hearts, and to ask God to "search us, and try us, and see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting."

Now turn your thoughts away from the unhappy Judas to think of the merciful Saviour. He came to live in our sinful world on purpose to save lost men. He pitied all our infirmities, and spent his life in doing good; but in the midst of his self-denying labors, while the sick and needy still pressed around for his aid, while thousands of children still needed his blessing, the envious priests "sought how they might destroy him;" and there was one among those who well knew how merciful and good he was, one who had professed to love him, ready to betray him into their hands.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

MATT. xxvi. 26—30.

26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

THE verses above are immediately following those at the head of the last chapter. If Judas left them at that time he was now probably making arrangements with the chief priests, and preparing to carry out his wicked plan; while Jesus still sat at the table surrounded by a few real friends, who he knew did indeed love him. This was the time, and these the circumstances, in which our blessed Saviour first taught his disciples to take bread and wine in memory of him. "He took bread, blessed and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'" Not that the bread was made into the real body of Christ, but that it was an emblem of his body, that is, a thing which represented it. This emblem of his body he broke and divided among all his disciples. After this he took the cup, or the vessel which contained the wine,

blessed it, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it." Wine is the emblem of the Saviour's blood, which freely flowed for sinners. "This is my blood which is shed for many." Not for the disciples only, who were seated around the table, but for many in all ages since that time, and in all ages yet to come; for many who are now living around us, and I hope for many who shall read this little book, and think with me on the love and pity of the compassionate Saviour. "For the remission," that is, the forgiveness, "of sins." The Bible says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Sins cannot be forgiven in any other way. After this, Jesus informs his disciples that he should not again partake of this supper with them. It was for them to celebrate after his death, and these emblems were to remind them, when they could see him no more, that he so loved them as to leave the bosom of his Father, and come to earth to die on the cross for them; and that he would always love them, and watch over them, and at some future day, when they had done their duty on earth, he would receive them to dwell with him in heaven. The meeting was closed by singing a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Perhaps the most of my readers have been present at what is called the communion, or celebration of the Lord's Supper, but it may be many of you have never inquired or thought what was meant by it. I will attempt to tell you, and if you have ever looked on this ordinance with a gay and careless mind, I hope you will never allow yourself to do it again. You observe the congre-

gation go out or change their seats, so that the members of the church are seated together, and the emblems of the Saviour's body and blood are handed only to them. It is said in Luke that when Jesus gave his disciples the bread and wine he said, "This do in remembrance of me." Now no other persons but such as really love the Saviour can keep this command, for none else can remember him with affection. Such persons unite together in forming a church, that the world may know that they are christians, and wish to obey all the commands of Christ. These are the persons who partake of the Lord's supper, and it would be very wicked for one who is not a church member to take the bread and wine with them. In 1 Corinthians it is said, that those who celebrate this ordinance "show forth the Lord's death till he come." For more than eighteen hundred years the followers of Christ have remembered him in this manner; and in this manner he will have friends to remember him till he comes the second time to earth, to call its inhabitants to judgment.

When our Saviour was seated around the table, as you read above, he was about to leave his disciples in the midst of a wicked world. He had been their guide and protector, and they had looked to him for support in all their troubles. Soon they would see him no more, and he well knew that in the midst of the trials which were coming upon them, they would be very liable to forget that they had such an almighty Friend. He knew that we who live in these last ages of the world, and all christians would sometimes find it very difficult to call to mind their absent Saviour,

and realize that he had died for them; therefore he gave them these beautiful emblems of himself. When he had ascended to heaven, his love would still be with his friends, and his care would protect them; this he wished to make them understand and feel when he was absent from them. As your friend who is about to leave you, presents you a book, or some other token of his friendship, that you may remember him by it, and as often as you see the present, think of his kindness and love, so Jesus left this ordinance to remind his friends of his pity and love for the needy and distressed, but especially to remind them of his death, which was not like the death of John, and other good men who have suffered death because they were faithful to the truth. Jesus died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." He came to earth on purpose to die for sinners. While here he relieved the distressed by working miracles, and went about doing good; but this was not the great errand on which he came. His errand was "to open a new and living way" for lost men to be saved. For this he gave himself a sacrifice; and all who truly celebrate the Lord's supper, remember that he has died for them, and take the bread and wine with gratitude and love, giving themselves away anew to Jesus, and praying that he will prepare them to go and dwell with him in heaven.

My dear reader, in following our Saviour's history thus far, he has been presented before you in many different scenes, and attended by various circumstances, but in all how benevolent and lovely he appears! Think of him at this time. One



of his professed friends had gone out to betray him. The band of soldiers were coming soon upon him. The hour of pain and fearful agony of mind was near. All this he knew, and yet he thought not of himself, but of his friends. He looked down through all the course of time, and appointed this simple yet touching memorial of his death, to comfort and console the hearts of those who love him, till time shall be no more, and christians shall be gathered to the Saviour's home, and no longer need an emblem of him, because they shall "see him face to face." Those who love Jesus, sit down to partake of this supper with solemn, grateful feelings. I hope some of you have hearts prepared to join them, and have united with the church; but if you only sit by to witness the communion let your countenance be sober, and your thoughts attentive; and regard the scene before you as you would one in which an affectionate family of children were looking at their departed father's last present, and as they pass it from one to another, were speaking of his last commands, and thinking of all his love and care for them. If you looked on such a family your thoughts could not be vain and trifling. Can they be so when you witness the celebration of the Saviour's dying love?

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### PETER'S SELF-CONFIDENCE; AND HIS DENIAL OF THE SAVIOUR.

MATT. xxvi. 33—35.

33. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

34. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

PETER, you recollect, was one of the twelve who are called the Apostles—the one who desired to walk on the water, and yet was so fearful and unbelieving that he began to sink, and cried out with fear. He had heard the Saviour's preaching, had seen his mighty works, and had sat with him at the supper. Peter felt sure that he loved the Saviour, and thought nothing could tempt him to say he did not love him—not even the fear of being put to death for his sake. Jesus had been telling his disciples, that all of them would be offended that night because of him, which means that they would be led to do wrong towards him by forsaking him when he was in distress. To this remark Peter answered as in the first of the verses above. He does not say, "though all men shall forsake thee, *I hope* I shall not." But he says positively, without doubt or fear, "Yet will not I." Jesus told him that that very night, before the cock should crow, he would deny him three times. Jesus too speaks positively, but this is far different from Peter's speaking so. He could

see the events of the day, and week, and year, before they arrived, and he knew what temptation his weak disciple was about to fall into, and that he would be too fearful to acknowledge himself his disciple. He told Peter that it would be so, yet he insisted, "Though I should die with thee yet will I not deny thee;" and it is added that the other disciples joined with him. Poor, short-sighted, erring man! He knew not that an hour of fearful trial was just before him, and that he would be left not only to deny repeatedly that he knew the Saviour, but even be so overcome by sin as to use profane language. Perhaps he thought he had been so long the Saviour's friend, and had met with so many things to try his faith and love, that he was now prepared for the worst of trials; but he knew not his own heart.

If you read the twenty-sixth chapter to the close you will find that when the armed men, sent by the chief priests, took Jesus and led him away to be crucified, Peter followed afar off, and went into the house where Jesus was taken, and sat with the servants to see the end. He could not but feel deeply interested in the blessed Saviour. He knew that he was altogether lovely; so innocent and good that none but vile men, such as were willing to speak falsely, would say he had done anything wrong—therefore he could not go away to his home, and try to forget that he had ever known Jesus; and yet when he saw how he was treated, and knew that he would soon be put to death, he was far from being willing to die with him. No, although he told Jesus that he had rather

die with him than deny him, he now chose to deny him rather than die with him.

In the last part of the chapter we learn that he said to those who asked him if he was not one that followed Jesus, "I know not the man," and when he was asked the third time "he began to curse and swear." Immediately after this the cock crew, and then Peter remembered the words of his once beloved Master, "Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice." Luke, in giving the same account, adds, that at this moment Jesus turned and looked upon Peter. The Saviour was at this time bound, and in the hands of wicked men, who were insulting and mocking him in the most cruel manner, but he did not forget his poor, tempted, sinning disciple. Perhaps he was not allowed to speak, but he was not yet fastened to the cross; he could turn and look, and as his eyes fell on Peter, he sent the spirit of repentance into his heart, for we are told that "he went out and wept bitterly." Mark says, Peter called to mind the words of Jesus, "and when he thought thereon he wept." O what an hour of bitter anguish was that when Peter fled away to weep! Those mild, compassionate eyes which had so often turned towards him with love had fallen on him once more, and that heavenly glance had sent conviction to his heart, and brought before him all his own guilt and baseness. As he thought of the pitying love of Jesus when he first saw him, and called him to leave his fishing net and follow him; of the mercy which sustained him when sinking amid the waves; and of the love, and power, and good-



ness which the Saviour had always shown towards him, and all who came to him during his whole ministry, he must have felt that he was the most ungrateful of men. He thought on his sins and wept. He began to repent, and now it would have been a pleasure and relief to him, could he have run to his injured Saviour, and kneeling before him, have bathed his feet with his tears, and entreated his forgiveness; but his Saviour was bound, and led away to be crucified. He could speak to him no more, could listen to no more of his soothing words, nor even have one more look from his eye. O, what consolation was left for Peter! There was one, my young reader. Jesus knew his heart, and if he was truly penitent for his sin, he could pray to be forgiven, and Jesus would know that he was sorry, and would still love and pity him. From what is afterwards written of Peter, and from what he wrote himself in his Epistles, we learn that he did truly repent, and become a more humble and pious man than he was before; and though it is not recorded in the Bible, we learn from history, which we have no doubt is correct, that he was at last crucified on account of his religion. Though his faith and courage once failed, he was afterward so strengthened by the grace of God as to suffer a distressing death, rather than again deny his Lord.

I have not dwelt on this distressing scene just for the purpose of leading you to think of the character of Peter. I wish you to observe that true christians are not perfect. The best of men are liable to fall into sin, though few good people, we hope, have ever sinned as Peter did. The Bible

says there is "not a just man that liveth and sinneth not." None but those who saw Jesus Christ have seen a person in human form who was perfect. He had the form of a man because he took upon him our nature, but within was the spirit of God, for he was the Son of God.

If all the inhabitants of the earth are sinners, and even christians have some evil left in their hearts, which sometimes shows itself in actions, you must not expect your pious friends to be entirely free from error, though you have reason to expect them to come nearer doing just right than those do who have not professed religion. When I was twelve years of age, several of my young friends, about my own age, and some a little older, professed to become christians; and I remember that I watched them very narrowly, and if I saw the least evidence that one of them felt any wrong disposition, I was ready to conclude that such a one was not a christian. Now this was wrong, and from such an error I would save you. If I had known one of my friends to commit a very wicked act, and not appear to feel sorry for it; or if I had been sure that he continued for a long time to neglect the duties of a christian, such as praying, and attending the worship of God; I should have had reason to *fear* he was not a christian; but I had no right to conclude my friend could not have a new heart because he sometimes appeared to feel wrong as I felt.

When the christian arrives at that happy place where Jesus is, he will be free from sin. The disposition to do wrong will be taken away, and he will no longer have to strive, and pray, and

watch against sin. While the christian remains here he does not sin without sorrow and repentance; and here is the difference between the true christian and the hypocrite. Judas acknowledged he had betrayed "innocent blood," but he discovered no real repentance for his sin. Peter "thought of his sin and wept," and his after life proved that his tears were tears of penitence.

Now let us think once more of the blessed Saviour. How numerous and how aggravated were the sorrows which swept over him! Not only betrayed by a false friend, but denied by one who truly loved him, but was unable to stand the hour of temptation; and abandoned by all, for it is said in the fifty-sixth verse that when the soldiers came to lay hold on Jesus, "all the disciples forsook him and fled."

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### OUR SAVIOUR'S VOLUNTARY DEATH.

MATT. xxvi. 51—54.

51. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear.

52. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

53. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54. But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

IN the verses which precede those above, we

have an account of Judas' coming with a great multitude of men armed with swords and staves, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people, to take Jesus and lead him to the governor.

When Judas had given the Saviour that false, betraying kiss, of which you have read in a former chapter, Jesus said to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" and immediately the men laid hold on Jesus, and took him. At this time you will learn from the first of the verses above, one of Jesus' friends drew a sword, and wounded one of the servants. In John's gospel we learn that it was Peter who thus rashly used the sword. This, you will understand, took place before Peter denied his Lord, for in the last chapter I went forward a little to finish the account of Peter. "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up thy sword." Luke informs us that Jesus immediately touched the servant's ear, and cured him. How meek and forgiving, how merciful and kind was Jesus, the Saviour of sinners! Although the armed men had laid violent hands on him, and were even then leading him away to insult, suffering, and death; he would not have his disciples raise one hand against them, and when one of them did it without his permission he would not allow his enemy to suffer a short time, from a slight wound, but in the midst of the tumult and alarm, while they were hurrying him away to the high priest, he wrought a miracle by healing the wounded man in a moment. He had said to his hearers, in his sermon on the mount, "Love your enemies, do good to them that persecute you," and how fully did he show them by his example what he meant by his



preaching. All our Saviour's life was a perfect example. He kept every rule of life which he laid down for us, and obeyed all the commandments of the Old Testament, for he said, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it."

In the fifty-third verse above, he says to his disciples, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Perhaps the disciples did not fully understand that Jesus had come on earth for the purpose of dying for sinners; and that now he had performed his works, finished his preaching, and appointed the Lord's Supper to be kept in remembrance of him, he was ready "to be offered." It may be my young reader has never thought on the subject, or really understood that Jesus died a voluntary death, that is, that he gave himself up willingly to die that sinners might be saved. Many christians have died for the cause of the truth, because they had rather die than become wicked. Such persons are called martyrs; but Jesus Christ was more than a martyr. They could not escape death but by telling falsehoods, or doing something wrong; Jesus could have taken himself away from his enemies in an instant, or he could have taken their breath away from them, and have made the whole multitude a vast body of lifeless corpses stretched on the ground, with their swords and staves lying powerless beside them; or, as he told his disciples, he could have commanded twelve legions of angels. One legion is from three to six thousand, and Jesus no doubt meant by this that if he chose to do it he could at once call to his aid a countless

number of heavenly beings; for he, whom vile, insignificant man despised and murdered, angels worshiped and obeyed. "But how then," said Jesus, "shall the scriptures be fulfilled."

After sin entered our world by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, God pitied the race of man, and promised at some future time to send a Saviour to redeem them. All the good people of whom we read in the ancient scriptures, believed and trusted in that Saviour, and looked forward to the time of his coming as we now look back to it. The prophets were taught by the spirit of God to foretell his coming, and describe the manner of his death. Isaiah said, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." If Jesus had called the angels, these scriptures would not have been fulfilled, and that offering would not have been made through which you and I may hope for mercy, and through which every human being is saved, if saved at all. But Jesus, our merciful Saviour, did not shrink back in the hour of danger and suffering. He loved us with an everlasting, an almighty love. Had he been only a man, his pity for us might have been lost in the midst of his own sufferings; but with the unchangeable purpose of a God he had given himself a sacrifice for sin, and with a love and pity which nothing could quench, he went steadily forward to finish the work of man's redemption.

Does not your heart warm with gratitude and love towards the Redeemer of lost men, as you read of his giving himself a willing sacrifice for sin, that ruined man might be saved? If not, my

dear reader, are you not fearful that you partake of the spirit of the chief priests and scribes, who could see nothing lovely in the character of the Saviour, and hated him without a cause?

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### OUR SAVIOUR'S SUFFERING.

MATT. xxvii. 46.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.

FROM the first of our Saviour's public ministry, we find that the chief priests were seeking to put him to death, and now as the time had arrived when he chose to give himself up to them, they were able to accomplish their purpose. I hope my reader will understand that these wicked men did not know that Jesus suffered himself to be taken by them, because he came to die for sinners, and therefore they were none the less guilty. They did not believe that he was the Saviour of the world, but they ought to have believed it; and to have loved him with all their hearts. They heard his gracious words, and saw his wonderful works, and it was only because they would not believe, and give their hearts to him, that they became so hardened in sin.

After the soldiers took Jesus, by order of the priests, he was led to the high priest, that he might examine him. When Caiaphas, the high-priest,

asked him if he was Christ, the Son of God, Jesus answered that he was, and he also said to him, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." At this the high priest rent his clothes, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy," which means very wicked language against God, and as he asked the people what they thought of it they said, "He is guilty of death;" and here the blessed Saviour was treated in the most abusive and insulting manner. They even spit in his face, and buffeted, or struck him with the fist. After this the chief priests and elders of the people consulted together about putting the Saviour to death, and then he was bound and led away to Pilate, the Roman governor. We are told by other evangelists that he was also carried before Herod, a Jewish ruler. Pilate, it appears, could not find any reason why Jesus should be crucified, and he urged the people to have him released, but the chief priests and elders persuaded the people to join in the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him." The Saviour was therefore delivered up to the envious, blood-thirsty Jews, and led away to be crucified. He was scourged, or beaten, and then the soldiers put on him a scarlet robe, and platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and bowed the knee before him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews." This was done on purpose to mock and insult the meek and lowly Saviour. After this we are told they again spit on him, and smote him on the head. When they were weary with this derision and cruelty, they fastened his precious body to the cross. A cross is a straight piece of wood, with another



piece fastened across it near the top. Large nails were driven through the Saviour's feet to confine him to the wood, and his arms were stretched out and confined to the cross piece by nails driven through the palms of his hands. The cross was set up in such a manner as to leave the feet of the Saviour about one yard from the ground. After Jesus was thus extended, his murderers sat down to watch him, and not satisfied with witnessing his sufferings in silence, they reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise, also, the chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save."

Once more, my dear reader, think of the blessed Saviour, and review his life from the time you first read of him as the sweet babe of Bethlehem, to this hour of his death. You remember how he sat on the bleak mountain side, speaking the words of love and wisdom to the ignorant multitude; how he banished disease and suffering, and produced health and happiness by his miraculous power; and how he loved little children, and wept over the sins of those who were too hardened to repent; and now behold him stretched upon the cross, dying a lingering death, surrounded by an insulting mob, who take a malicious pleasure in beholding his distress. And why is this? Are you not astonished and perplexed to think an innocent person should suffer thus? And then when you think of his benevolence, that he not only injured none, but did good to all; and, added to all this, when you think of his miracles, which

proved him to be the Son of God, do you not wonder still more and more that he should be left to suffer thus? It is not strange that you should wonder. It is a mystery to all who hear of it; a mystery which can be explained in only one way, and that we know is the right explanation, because we find it in the scriptures. He did not suffer for his own sake, but for the sake of sinners. Isaiah says, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; with his stripes we are healed;" and "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Peter says, "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree."

The whole family of man, you know, are sinners. God is too holy to love sinners, and too just to suffer sin to go unpunished. His pure law required that guilty man should suffer everlasting punishment, but at the same time he pitied us, and was willing that his Son should die, "the just for the unjust," to bring us back to God. Jesus looked on us in our lost condition, and offered to suffer the punishment which we deserved. His Father accepted the offering, and "laid on him the iniquities of us all." It was this heavy load of sins that caused the Saviour to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

We have been thinking of the distress of body which our Saviour endured, but we have reason to suppose that was trifling, compared with the agony of his spirit. It was not the torture of the nails, nor the pains of expiring nature, that caused this bitter cry, but the punishment due to our sins, the punishment for the sins of the whole world, which came over him like a flood, and hid his

Father's face from him, and made him feel that God had forsaken him. Jesus, you know, was pure and holy. Though the effects of sin were laid upon him, it did not make him a sinner, therefore it was far more distressing to him to suffer the punishment of sin, and be driven away from the presence of his righteous Father.

O look, dear reader, at that dying Saviour. Look in your mind, and think how willingly he suffered. He might have ascended up from the hands of his murderers, or he might have caused the ground to open and swallow them up; but then the inhabitants of the earth must have been lost; you and I could have had no hope of pardon.

Think how dreadfully he suffered. Death by crucifixion was exceedingly painful. It was a slow, distressing torture, far more fearful than such a death as John suffered, who was beheaded in the prison; and yet this was but a small part of his suffering. We have no language to describe, nor thoughts to conceive, of the distress of his holy soul, when he groaned under the sins of a whole world.

Think how meekly he suffered. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." In giving the account of our Saviour's death, Luke relates some circumstances not mentioned by Matthew. He says when Jesus was about to expire he prayed for his murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." O how did his mercy overcome every other feeling, even the distress he suffered from the punishment of sin, and with his latest breath he prays that his enemies may be forgiven. Say, dear children, should you

not love such a Saviour? A Saviour, so kind, so meek and forgiving, so willing to bear the sins of a wicked world, and die the painful death of the cross, to save us from the punishment which our sins have deserved? Yes, you must give yourself to him, and love him with all your heart, or you can never be happy. Do not suppose that his atonement will save you, unless you accept of him as your Saviour, and seek to obey all his commands, and desire to be made pure and holy as he is.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### OUR SAVIOUR'S RESURRECTION.

MATT. xxviii. 6—10.

6. He is not here : for he has risen as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead ; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee ; there ye shall see him : lo, I have told you.

8. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy ; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid : go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

AFTER Jesus had uttered the last cry, and his spirit departed ; his mangled body hung lifeless on the cross, having suffered all its pain. John informs us that one of the soldiers plunged a spear into his side, but this gave him no pain, for he



was already dead. Perhaps his enemies were willing to go away and allow his friends to draw nigh, now they had gratified their wicked feelings by putting him to death. Though they had taken him, and "by wicked hands had crucified and slain him," the blessed Saviour still had friends who loved him, and thought with aching hearts on his cruel death. To these good people the Saviour's body was very dear; and if they could do nothing to save him from death they hoped to save his body from further abuse by laying it in a quiet grave.

We are told that one of his friends, a rich man, named Joseph, went to Pilate, the Roman governor, "and begged the body of Jesus." Pilate gave him permission to take it down from the cross, and he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new sepulchre, or tomb, placing a heavy stone at the door of it. There were other friends of Jesus, who brought sweet spices to anoint his body, according to the custom of the country. Two of these are called in the first verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew—Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary; and it is said that they came "at the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, to see the sepulchre." Luke mentions that they brought the spices, to anoint the body of Jesus.

The end of the Sabbath means the Jewish Sabbath, which was the same as our Saturday. It was therefore early on our Sabbath morning that these pious women came to manifest their love for their departed Saviour by anointing his body with precious ointment. Perhaps you will think it strange that they supposed they could come near

to the body of Jesus after he had been buried, but it is not strange, because in that country tombs are large rooms under ground, and a person can enter them without trouble. As these women came near to the sepulchre, they found the stone rolled away from the door, and an angel sitting on it. Pilate had sent some men to watch the sepulchre, and these men were so frightened by the appearance of an angel that they fainted and fell down; but the angel was a beautiful and holy being, and no good person need to be afraid of him. He spoke kindly to the women, saying, "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified." He then told them as you see in the first of the verses above, that he was not in the tomb, but was risen; and invited them to look in and "see the place where the Lord lay." After this the angel tells them to go quickly, and inform the Saviour's disciples that he had risen, and would go before them into Galilee. The women departed quickly, and hastened to bring to the sorrowing disciples the joyful news that their Lord had risen from the dead. They went "with fear and great joy." Perhaps they could not help feeling some fear when they knew that they had been talking with a holy being from heaven, but they felt great joy, for they saw that the Saviour whom they loved was not in the tomb; and they believed that the angel told them the truth when he said, "he is risen." Now they hoped soon to see Jesus again, and hoped too that his enemies, and the enemies of all righteousness would not be allowed to rule over the world, and make the people obey them.

They felt so joyful, and so eager that the disci-

ples should share their joy, that they ran to bring them word; but on their way, behold, Jesus met them. That very Saviour whom they had seen put to death by the cruel soldiers stood before them, and they heard his mild, compassionate voice saying "All Hail," which was an expression used in that country when friends met together. The women held him by the feet and worshiped him. We cannot wonder that they bowed down before him, and clasped his feet with gratitude and love, when they knew that he had died to save them. In the tenth verse you read that Jesus said to them, "Be not afraid." O he is the same Saviour! How tender and merciful, when he knew that they were weak and fearful, and that such a strange thing as talking with an angel, and with one just risen from the dead, would make them tremble and fear even though their hearts were glad, he said first "Be not afraid." After this he sent them, as the angel had done, to tell his brethren, meaning his disciples, that he would meet them in Galilee.

From all this account we learn that Jesus rose from the grave, and triumphed over death. If my young friends have felt some pleasure in tracing the history, and studying the character of Jesus Christ, as they have been turning the leaves of this little book, perhaps they feel some joy now, when we have passed through the dark scene of his sufferings and death, and have come to the triumphant period of his resurrection; but have you no further interest in this event? O yes, each one of you has a personal interest in the Saviour's resurrection. He rose from the grave by his own

power; as he told his disciples in the tenth chapter of John, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." He died for us, and rose also for us, promising, as we learn from different parts of the New Testament, to raise up our bodies as he raised his own. Your body, young and healthful as it now is, must one day moulder in the earth, and is it not a pleasant thought to you that the dust of your body will sleep in the care of that Saviour who once had a body like your own, and who raised himself from the grave, and has promised to raise you also? When Jesus shall call the dead from their graves, the bodies of those who loved and served him while on earth will be raised to enjoy a life which will never end. They will be made like Christ's glorious body, and be admitted to the happy place that he has prepared for them. Never again will they feel pain, never become feeble with age, never die again; and for the hope of such a glorious resurrection we should now offer praise and thanksgiving to him "who hath loved us, and given himself for us."

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### OUR SAVIOUR'S GREAT COMMISSION.

MATT. xxviii. 18—20.

18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:



20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

IN the last chapter Jesus had appointed to meet his disciples in Galilee. To that place they went, and their beloved Saviour "came to them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The disciples must have known that Jesus was very powerful when they saw him control diseases, and make the winds obey his word; and now when they saw that he had come forth from the dead they had new evidence of his power; but it may be that they did not yet know how great his power was; and now, when he was about to leave them, he assured them that he had all power in heaven and in earth. Though his disciples would soon see him beside them no more, and would sometimes be unable to realize that his spirit was with them, still they need not fear the power of wicked men, or of any other beings, for Jesus was more powerful than they, and if they trusted in him he would guide them through all dangers and difficulties, and bring them at last to the enjoyment of heavenly rest. But they had yet much to do on earth, and in the nineteenth and twentieth verses he gives them their commission, or tells them what their employment must be.

Our Saviour had now fulfilled his mission on earth. He had shown his perfect example, had wrought his miracles, and preached his pure and holy doctrines. He had died to atone for our sins, and had risen from the grave to show his conquest over death, and now he was about to leave his gospel for his followers to preach in his

name. Here, in the two last verses above, he gives them a most solemn charge to teach—not the inhabitants of one town or country, not such as spoke their own language only—but “*all nations* ;” baptizing them, as you recollect he was baptized by John, only adding, “In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ;” and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them. All those instructions which he gave in his “sermon on the mount,” and all that he taught during his whole life, they were to give to others in his name; and he adds, “lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Though he should not be with them in body as he had been, his presence would be with them, and with all his people, even with those who should live in the last days of the world. He would know all their trials, and comfort their hearts, and strengthen them to do all that he required of them.

We do not understand that this command and promise were given only to the disciples whom Jesus then addressed, but to all whom he should call to preach his gospel in all ages of the world. The minister whom you hear on the Sabbath, and all who now preach the gospel in this or any other country believe this command to be addressed to them, and if they do not devote their lives to the employment of teaching the people from the Word of God, they will disobey him. Think of this, dear reader, when you are in the house of God, and do not let your thoughts wander about, nor let your eyes rest on your Sabbath school book to read it in meeting time, for that pious man who is addressing you is one whom Jesus has sent to

teach you the way to heaven. He has a message of warning or entreaty for you, sent by the friend of sinners; if you slight that message, you slight him who died that you might live. If your father sent a message to you by your brother, and you treated him with indifference, and would not listen to his words, would you not disobey and dishonor your father? So when you disregard the words of the minister, it is not against him, but against the great and holy God that you sin. Again, you sin against God if you are willing, for trifling excuses, to stay away from his public worship, where his ministers go to instruct us. Do not allow an indolent feeling, or the desire for a nice dress when you already have a decent one, keep you from attending meeting. I have one more anecdote to tell you of one of my little friends who is gone from earth; and I hope it will lead you to love the house of God while you enjoy health. Since I have been preparing this book for you, but a few weeks since, a little boy of my acquaintance who had been long pining away with disease, said to his mother on Saturday, "May I go to meeting to-morrow?" "My dear," said his mother, "you are too sick to go to meeting." "But I have not been in a great while," said the little boy; "I want to go very much;" and when his mother told him that he could not even have his clothes on, nor sit up a moment, he said he could be wrapped in his gown, and ride in his father's arms. Just as that earthly Sabbath closed, on which my little friend was so anxious to join the worshipers of God below, his spirit was taken, as we hope, to the eternal Sabbath of heaven, and

prepared to join the assembly of the saints on high, where disease or sin can never enter, and the worship of God is never interrupted.

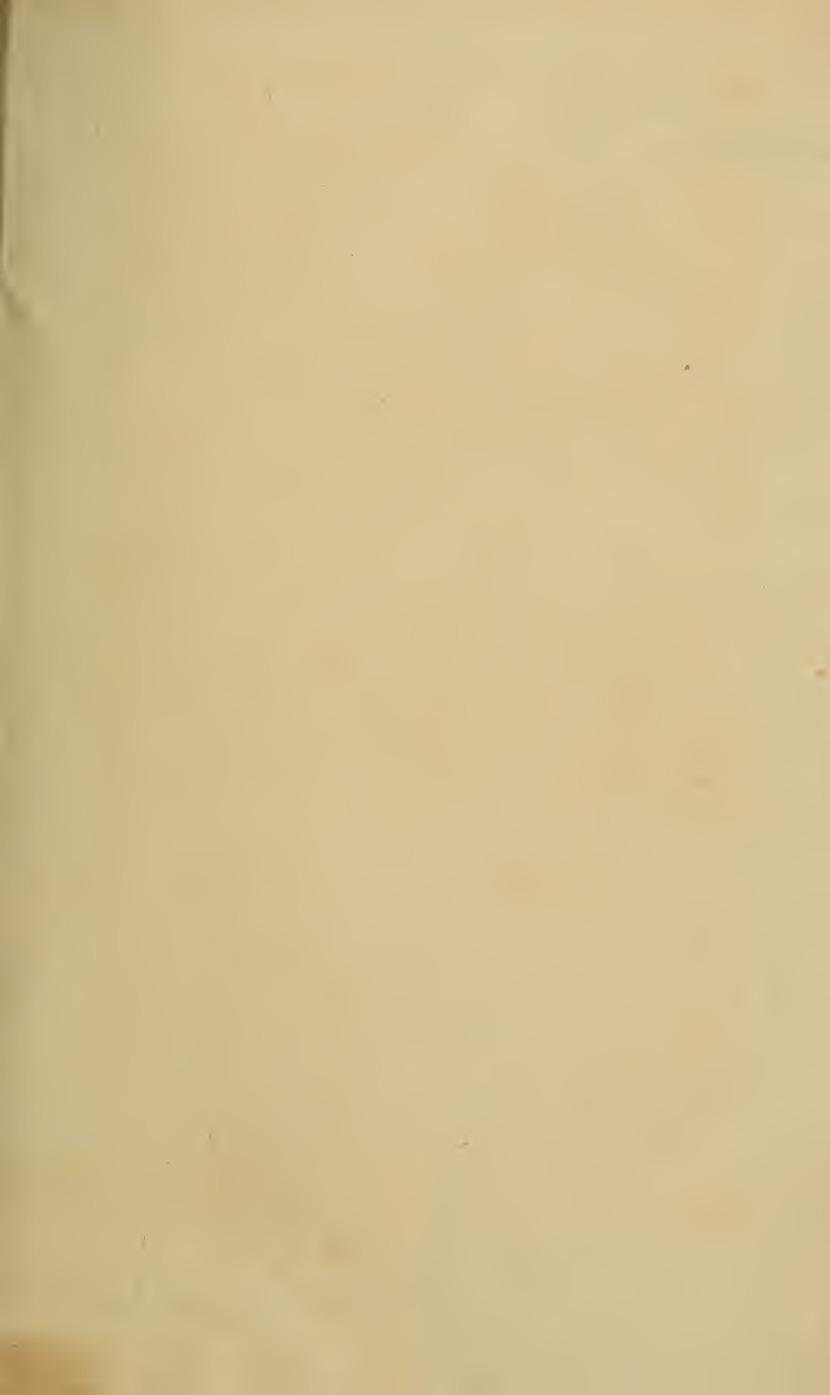
It is in obedience to this last command of our Saviour, that the missionaries of whom you have heard and read, leave all their dear friends at home, and go to spend their lives with the heathen. These pious ministers and their wives remember that Jesus said "Go teach all nations," and though they love their country and their friends as well as we love ours, they are willing to bid adieu to all, because they pity the heathen, and wish to have them hear the gospel, and be saved through the death of Christ. These self-denying people bear witness that Jesus remembers his promise, "lo, I am with you always," for they write home that they enjoy the presence of Jesus, and are very happy in keeping his commands; and those who have died in heathen lands have said with their latest breath that Jesus was with them, and they never regretted leaving their native land to carry the gospel to the heathen.

Matthew relates nothing more respecting our Saviour, after this last command and promise, but we learn from the first chapter of Acts that he visited his disciples occasionally for forty days, and then they saw him ascend up into heaven. In the last chapter of Luke it is said, "And he led them out as far as Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them. and carried up into heaven."









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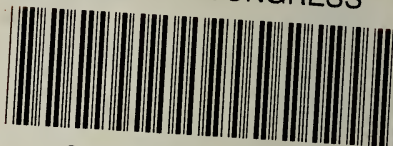
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